ROBIN'S READINGS.

Part 2.

THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN GORDON.

The Adventures of Robin Gordon.

PEGGY, AND HOW I COURTED HER.

A HOPE it's nae herm tae coort. If it is, my, but this is a sinfu' wurl! There's sum fowk cannae beer ye tae menshin sich a thing, an' they wud nearly faint if ye wud say a wurd aboot kissin'. A wunner did they iver get a kiss themsels! At the time A wuz coortin' Peggy, she leeved wi' her auld granny, as she ca'd her, an' that wuz jist the kin' o' her. A mean the granny, an' no Peggy. The auld buddy's name wuz Peggy Mewhunyee, an' the like o' hers' no' to be met wi' very affen in yin generashun. She had niver been merried hersel' an' she wuz a perfect man-hater. There wuznae yin, auld or young, likit till gang neer the hoose, an' she had sich a bad temper that we used tae ca' her "Betty Tantrums" fur a nickname. My, the fowk did tell quer things aboot her. They said that whun she got oot o' temper aboot ocht she wud a pu'd the pigs' ears till they squeeled maist dreedfully,an' lickit them wi' sally rods till they wur a' in walts; an' mony a time A heerd them sayin' that she dookit Wully Gunyin in the horse hole because he passed a joke wi' Peggy in the hey fiel' yin day.

A niver cud tell hoo A got roon the auld crayter. They say A hae a bit o' the "blarney" aboot me, an' shair eneuch A maun hae had sumthin' o' that whun A wuz fit tae tak Peggy frae auld Betty Tantrums.

Peggy wuz an orfan. Her da an' auld Betty Mewhunyee wur brither an' sister, an' whin the da dee'd, Betty tuk wee Peggy hame wi' her, an' frae that day she aye ca'd the auld buddy her granny. A hae min' o' the furst time Peggy an' me seen yin anither. My da had heerd that Betty had a wheen o' seed prittas tae sell; sum terble guid sort, A' beleev the wur bocht frae Bilfast, an' A heerd him tellin' my ma yin day that he wud like terble weel tae hae a cupple o' stane o' them.

"Weel, awa ye gang," sez my ma, "an' get a wheen."

"Heth, A wull not," sez he, "she's a wuman A'm afeerd o' my life o'."

"Weel, sen' Rabin," sez she.

"She'll hunt the dug at me," sez I.

"Sorra feer o' her," sez my ma. "It's only the men she disnae like; an' what ir you bit a lump o' a wee boy."

Min' ye A wuz sumwhaur aboot twa-an'-twunty at the time.

Weel, A went; but tae tell ye the truth a wuznae terble wullin', fur A had heerd sae mony stories aboot Betty; but then on the ither han' A heerd the young fellows talkin' aboot Peggy bein' sich a nice lass, an' A had a kin' o' kureyosity on me tae see her. It wuz twa lang mile tae Betty's hoose; hooaniver, it wuz a walk A niver had raison tae regret, an' A think nether had Peggy. Whun A got till the hoose A felt my heart batin' ower ocht, an' A wuz very neer turnin' back hame agen. At last A pluckit up courage an' knockit at the daur wi' a wee bit slip o' a rod A had in my han'.

The dug set up a maist tremenjus barkin', an' then A heerd Betty cryin' at him—

"Haud yer tongue, sur! Awa an' lie doon!"

Then the daur wuz apened by auld Betty. She had her specs on, an' she glowered at me as if she wuz lukin' cleen through me, an' sez she—

"Wha's wee boy ir you?"

"A'm a son o' Davey Gordon's, o' Bellycuddy," sez I, "an' my da sent me ower till see if ye cud obleege him wi' aboot twa stane o' them new soart o' seed prittas that ye hae."

"A daur say A cud," sez she. "Cum forrit, cum forrit," sez she. "Dinnae be feered o' the dug. Lie doon, Towser!" an' she gied the dug a clipe wi' the shank o' the beesom that sent him oot yelpin'.

A steppit in, an' Betty set forrit a chair tae the fire, an' tell't me tae sit doon till she wud get yin o' her slippers that she had loast. She lukit unner the settlebed, an' tables, an' chers, an' at last she says—

"That dug's aye carryin' aff sumthin', an' A beleev he haes made aff wi' my slipper."

Thinks I tae mysel, "It wuz mebbe a' the puir thing had fur his brekfast."

A' this time A wuz wunnerin' whaur Peggy wuz; but jist wi' that the auld wuman cries oot—

"Peggy!"

"Yis, granny," sez a voice awa doon the room, an' it wuz jist like music.

"What ir ye daein'?" sez Betty.

" A'm smoothin' a wheen aprens," sez Peggy.

" Weel, cum here, A want ye," sez Betty.

A heerd the clatter o' a smoothin' iron, an' oot cum a bonnie yung lass, wi' her black hair hingin' a' roon her shooders, an' shinin' like the wing o' a craw whun the sun's on it.

" Tak this boy oot tae the pritta hoose," sez Betty, " an' gie him twa stane o' them seed prittas. A wud gaun mysel', but that dug has made aff wi' my slipper."

" Yis, granny," sez she, an' she lukit at me tae cum wi' her.

My, A cudnae help pattin' the dug on the heid as A went oot the daur! A cud a tuk him up in my erms an' huggit him fur rinnin' aff wi' auld Betty's slipper!

A niver seen a lass like Peggy afore nor since, an' A wuz that muckle struk wi' the luk o' her that A cudnae tell ye this day whuther A trevilled till the pritta hoose or no'. A niver min' my feet tuchin' the grun.'

The furst thing she said wuz, " Hae ye ocht tae pit them in? "

" Mem? " sez I, an' A gied a wee jump, fur the soun' o' her voice startit me like.

She lauched, an' sez she—

" Hae ye ocht tae carry the prittas in? "

" Oh, ay," sez I, " A hae a bag."

Weel, we got the prittas weighed, an' as shair as A'm here if A didnae dae a' A cud tae keep her back. Jist as A apened the mooth o' the bag fur her tae pit them in, A let the bag drap, an' awa went the prittas ower the fluir.

" Hoots, toots! " sez I, " my fingers ir a' thooms the day."

Peggy lauched, an' sez she, " Am' feared o' my iron coolin'."

" A beg yer pardin fur keepin' ye," sez I, an' A gethered up the prittas an' put them intil the bag.

" What's the price o' them? " sez I.

" Ye can settle wi' granny," sez she.

A thocht tae mysel' that A wud reyther dale wi' Peggy; hooaniver A said nae mair, but went back till the kitchen an' pied the auld wuman.

Whun A got hame A made a regular fule o' mysel'.

" Weel," sez my ma, " what did she say till ye? "

Sez I, " she said she wuz afeerd o' lettin' her smoothin' iron cool."

" Ir ye daft, boy? " sez my ma; " did ye get the prittas? "

" A did," sez I, au' A laid them doon as cannY as if they had been eggs.

A wuz in hopes that A wud hae tae gang back fur mair, but my da wuz mair nor a match fur me. A wantit him no' tae hae eneuch prittas fur the gerden, an' advised him no' tae cut them, bit jist to pit them in hale.

" Blethers ! " sez he, " that wud be extrevagance."

Then A laid them that close in the drills that he wuz gaun tae cuff me, an' ivery time A got his back turned A cloddit a handfu' o' them ower the dyke.

It wuz a' nae use. We had what din us, an' A seen little chance o' gettin' back tae see Peggy. My, this love's a quer thing ! A knowed A wuz in love, an' A tried tae throw it aff, but it wuz like shoemaker's wax, the mair A rocht wi' it, it stuk till me the harder. A cud think o' naethin' but Peggy ; her black hair and e'en, an' her purty white teeth an' rosy cheeks, wur aye afore me. Talk aboot futtygraffs ! A had nae need o' Peggy's ; her image wuz niver oot o' my sicht !

Then A got that lazy A cudnae wurk, an' A wud a drappit the rines mony a time, an' sut doon on the ploo hannel for hooers jist lukin' at the grun'. My da gruppit me that wae yin day, an' sez he—

" Ir ye no' weel, boy ? "

" A'm richtly," sez I, an' wi' that A gruppit the rines. " A wuz jist givin' the powny a rest," sez I.

A saw him lukin' gie an' hard at me, but A jist gied the beest a slap wi' the rines, an' cried at him—

" Wine, Johnny ! wine, sir ! gee-up."

My da dannered up an' doon the fur a while, an' then went awa an' left me.

They tell me that it wuz a nice lass furst set Bobby Burns a writin' sangs, an' A beleev it ivery wurd. Dae ye know what A'm gaun tae tell ye, but it's astonishin' the pooer a lass haes ower you. It bates ocht ! Afore A kent what A wuz aboot A wuz busy makin' sangs aboot Peggy. My ! if ye had heerd them. But A burned them as fast as A wrote them. There mebbe wuznae muckle poatry in them, but there wuz plenty o' luv, an' ye micht a heerd the big hot words makin' the ink fizzle at the point o' my pen.

A think my da suspected me, fur yin day he sez till me, sez he—

"Rabin, A doot yer in luv."

"A wudnae say but A em," sez I, "in luv, an' daurnae tell it."

"What fur?" sez he; "A wud niver a got yer ma if A had been like you."

"Your case is very different frae mine," sez I.

"Hoo's that?" sez he.

"Why," sez I, "it wuz my ma you had tae dale wi', but this is a strange lass A'm in luv wi'."

A niver seen my da lauchin' as hearty in his life, an' he went awa in tae tell my ma.

That very nicht, efter A loused the horses an' got my supper, A went oot tae tak a danner, an' afore A kent A wuz on the auld road leadin' up tae Betty Mewhunyee's. A wuz dannerin' alang wi' my han's in my pokits an' whustlin' a tune. It wuz a nice quate mun-licht nicht as iver A seen, an' jist as A turned Tam Bunt's corner an' cum in sicht o' Wully Kirk's, A seen a wuman on the road afore me. A pyed nae mair attention tae her, hooaniver, bit drappit my heid agen an' dannered alang till A wuz scaured wi' hearin' a screech. Whun A lukit up there wuz Wully Kirk's big white goat stannin' up on its hin' legs an' makin' at the wuman wi' its horns, an' she wuz feered tae gang a step farder. It wuznae lang till A wuz forrit, an' A made a dash at the goat, an' gied a gulder that wud a scaured a mad bull. It jumpit up ontil the dyke, an' whun it got there it turned roon an' lukit at me, as much as tae say—

"Touch me if ye daur, boy; A'm Wully Kirk's goat," an' A shud tell ye that iverybuddy fur miles roon wuz feered o' it.

"Wud ye," sez I, an' wi' that I gied yin jump ontil the dyke; then A gruppit him be the berd, an' afore he had time tae say a wurd A throwed him cleen heels ower heid, an' he fell at the tither side o' the dyke.

A wuz that wae excited that A had forgottin' a' aboot the wuman, an' A wuz stanin' lauchin' at the goat, whun A heerd sumbuddy sayin'—

"Oh, A'm sae muckle obleeged tae ye."

There wuz nae mistakin' that voice! A birled roon, an' there wuz Peggy stanin' on the road, an' the saft munebeams glintin' on her white teeth as she smiled at me. A jumpit aff the dyke quicker than A had jumpit ontil it, an' gruppit the han' that Peggy reached oot till me.

She lauched, an' sez she, "A doot ye hae hurt the goat."

"If A had kent it wuz *you* he wuz gaun tae stick A wud a brauk his neck," sez I.

"Tak' care Wully Kirk diznae catch ye," sez she.

Sez I, "A jist care as little fur Wully as A dae fur his goat; an' noo, jist fur fear the beest micht follow ye, if ye hae nae objeckshuns A'll see ye hame."

"Oh, A hae nae objeckshuns," sez she, "but——."

"But what?" sez I.

"My granny," sez she.

"Leev her tae me," sez I.

A tuk her by the han', and we steppit alang like the babes in the wud, an' it wuz a guid bit afore ether o' us spauk.

Isn't it a very kureyous thing hoo luv ties fowks' tongues? If A had met wi' onybuddy else that nicht A wud a rattled awa an' talkit as muckle as ye like, but whun A fun' mysel' steppin' alang side by side wi' Peggy, sorra a wurd cud A get intil my heid. She wuz the furst till speek hersel', a' sez she—

"It's a darlin' munelicht nicht that," sez she.

"The nicest nicht A iver seen in my life," sez I.

"Wuz yer da pleesed wi' the seed prittas?" sez she.

"Indeed he wuz," sez I, "an' so wuz my ma; but A wuznae terble weel pleesed wi' them mysel'," sez I.

"Hoo wuz that?" sez she.

Sez I, "There wuz ower mony o' them."

"Is that a fact?" sez she.

"Ay, they went ower far," sez I.

She lukit at me as if she didnae ken what A meant, an' ses I, "A see ye dinna unnerstan' me."

"A dae not," sez she.

"Weel, Peggy," sez I, "if they hadnae a went sae far, my da wud a sent me back fur mair."

"Had ye no bother eneuch cumin' tho yince?" sez she.

"Na, wuman," sez I, "A wud like tae hae the same errand ivery day."

She hung doon her heid fur she seen me lukin' gie an' hard at her, an' the puir thing didnae speek agen fur mair nor five minits an' whun she did say ocht it wuz aboot sum ither subjec' a'thegither.

At last we cum in sicht o' the hoose, an' sez she—

"Mister Gordon, A'll bid ye guid nicht, an' A'm fur iver obleeged till ye fur yer kindness."

"Dinnae mention it," sez I, "bit A'm no gaun tae leev ye that wae; whun A hae cum sae far, A'll see ye safe inside the hoose."

"A doot my granny will no be pleesed," sez she.

"Niver feer ye," sez I, "she's no' half as bad as the fowk says she is."

She said nae mair, an' in we steppit. Whun the dug heerd the strange fut, he let a yirr oot o' him, an' made ower a' the teers at me iver ye seen, an' it tuk baith auld Betty an' Peggy a' their time tae keep him aff me.

Whun he did lie doon, Peggy tell't me tae cum forrit, an' sez auld Betty, sez she—

"Wha's this ye hae wi' ye?"

A seen Peggy lauchin', an' sez I—

"Dae ye no' ken me, Betty? A'm young Rabin Gordon, o' Bellycuddy."

"Waen, deer, is it you?" sez she, "cum forrit an' tak' a stool at the fire. Did ye cum fur a wheen mair prittas?"

"Na, Betty," sez I, "A think we hae as mony as wull dae us."

Wi' that she threw a lump o' fir in the fire, an' gied the hearth a bit skite wi' the beesom, an' sez she, turnin' roon tae Peggy,

"Mebbe the boy wud eat a peece?"

A deklare but A didnae ken whaur A wuz sittin'; hooaniver A didnae want tae be fa'in oot wi' Betty, an' sez I, lauchin'—

"Thank ye, mem, A jist had my supper afore A left hame."

Peggy spauk oot then, an' sez she—

"Granny, the young man haes been very kin' tae me, an' he jist cum tae see me safe hame."

My, if ye had seen Betty at that. She got on her specs, an' she glowered furst at the yin, an' then at the tither, an' at last she sez till Peggy—

"What's that ye say, lass?"

Peggy then begood an' tell't her about the goat neer stickin' her, an' hoo A had saved her life; an' A deklare bit the auld buddy wuz nearly oot o' her senses. Furst she wuz sae mad at Wully Kirk an' his goat, an' nixt she wuz sae thankfu' tae me fur what A had din.

She thankit me twunty times an' mair, an' then she begood tae get sayrious lukin', an' sez she—

"Rabin, A ken a' belangin' tae ye, an' yer cum o' very dacent fowk; but A dinnae alloo onybuddy tae be cumin' here efter Peggy."

"Wud ye even sich a thing till a waen like me?" sez I.

"Weel, deed yer naethin' bit a waen," sez she; "but it's as weel tae tell ye in time. A niver merried mysel' an' A'm determined no tae pert wi' Peggy as lang as A leev."

"A cudna blame ye," sez I. "If she wuz in my cherge A wad jist be o' the same noshun."

"Yer a rael sensible spaukin' boy," sez she.

"This marryin's a fule thing onywae," sez I; an' A managed tae get throwin' a luk at Peggy, as much as tae say, "Dae ye see hoo A'm humbuggin' yer granny!"

"It's a' that," sez Betty, "an' there's a guid wheen folk merried the nicht that wud gie a' they're worth tae be free agen."

"An' there's jist as mony, A daur say, that's anxious tae get tied," sez I.

Weel, we crackit awa, an' A got roon the buddy wunnerfully; but A tuk guid care niver tae let her see me lukin' at Peggy, an' no yin wurd did A say tae the dear, till A riz tae cum awa. "Weel, Betty," sez I, "A'll drap in noo an' then tae hae a crack wi' ye, an' see hoo yer gettin' on."

"Ay dae," sez she, "A'll be gled tae see ye, altho', Guid be thankit, A hae brave health, if it wuznae for the roomytics."

"Ir ye bothered wi' them?" sez I.

"Nae whaur but in my han's an' wrists," sez she. A bid her guid nicht, an' then A turned roon tae Peggy, an' sez I—

"Guid nicht, lassie, an' see that ye dae what yer granny bids ye, an' if iver A ken a fellow tae pit the speek on ye, A'll be waur on him nor A wuz on the goat."

Betty lauched ower ocht, an' sez she—

"Show the boy oot, Peggy."

Peggy apened the daur fur me, an' bid me guid nicht. A hel' oot my han' an' she shuk han's wi' me, an' A went awa that happy that A niver kent till A wuz hame.

A day or twa efter this A wuz oot wi' the gun an' shot a cupple o' rebbits. My, it wuz the luckiest thing iver A seen. A hid them in the barn till nicht cum on, an' aff A startit fur Betty Mewhunyee's an' made her a praisent o' the rebbits.

" Waen, dear, yer far ower kin'," sez she.

" No yin bit," sez I, " if ye rowl the skins o' them roon yer wrists it'll cure the pains."

Weel, she didnae ken hoo tae skin them, an' so A had tae dae it fur her, an' then A said A wud gang back whun the skins wur dry an' show Peggy hoo till mak' a pair o' mittens fur her granny. Then whun A went back, an' wuz showin' her the wae till mak' them, A gied her sich a lekter as ye niver heerd aboot hoo tae luk efter her granny, an' sez I—

" Peggy, if iver A ken ye fur tae prepoas tae merry an' gang an' lave yer auld granny, A dinnie ken what A'll dae on ye."

My, the auld buddy thocht there wuznae the like o' me in the hale country side, an' she begood tae think lang fur me cummin' in tae hae a cup o' tay an' a crack wi' her.

Peggy an' me unnerstud yin anither lang afore this. She kent richtly that it wuz tae see her A went there, an' yin nicht whun Betty wuz daen sum wee turns aboot the daurs A tell't her, jist in my ain blunt wae, that A cudnae get throo' life wi'oot her, an' axed her if she wud be my wife.

" Oh, Rabin," sez she.

" Noo, Peggy," sez I, " it's ether tae be yis or no."

" My granny'll fair murder me," sez she.

" No' while A'm here tae tak' yer pert," sez I.

" Oh, A cudnae lee my granny," sez she.

" Then, fareweel, Peggy," sez I, " an' ye'll niver see me mair."

" Yer makin' fun," sez she.

" Indeed, indeed, A em not," sez I, " fur a'll gang an' list the morrow."

" Oh, what wud yer fowk say till that ? " sez she, an' A seen the teers cumin' till her e'en.

" What wud Peggy say till it ? " sez I.

" A wudnae like ye tae list," sez she.

" Weel, wull ye purvent me ? " sez I, an' A hel' oot my han'.

The teers run doon her cheeks, an' she laid her han' in mine.

My da an' my ma, Betty an' iverything else wuz forgot then, an' A slippit my erm roon Peggy's waist an' drew her face nixt mine. " There's mony a slip atween the cup an' the lip," an' A got an illystration o' it then that A niver forgot.

" Peggy, darlin'," sez I, bit A didnae get oot anither word, till somethin' cummed doon wi' a whack on my back, an' whun

A birled roon, there wuz Betty wi' a face on her like a teegar, an' the beesom up reddy tae cum doon agen if A hadnae gruppit it.

"What ir ye aboot, boy?" sez she.

"Hoots, wuman!" sez I, "keep yer temper; A'm only geein' Peggy a bit o' a lesson."

"A bit o' a lesson, indeed!" sez she; "dae ye think A haenae the use o' my e'en an' my ears. A wheen minits afore A went oot ye wur busy lekterin' her agen the boys, an' the minit A turn my back ye begin tae kiss her."

"Oh, granny!" sez Peggy, burstin' oot a roarin' an' rinnin' awa doon the house.

"*Me* kiss her!" sez I, "A wuz jist bringin' in a wee bit o' an illystration in my lekter tae shew her what sum o' the boys wud attempt."

She drappit the beesom an' stud lukin' at me. A niver smiled, but lukit at her back agen. At last, sez she—

"Rabin, A tuk ye fur a waen, bit ye hae been ower mony for me. Awa hame wi' ye, an' niver darken my daur agen."

"Noo, Betty," sez I, "lissen till raison, wuman."

"A'll lissen tae naebuddy," sez she, nor nether she wud, an' A had tae gether up my hat an' cum awa. There wuznae muckle sleep for me that nicht, an' if a' my prayers had lichtit on Betty Mewhunyee, she wud a dried up an' floo awa like a pinch o' snuff afore mornin'.

Daylicht cum at last, an' A made up my min' tae tell my ma. A wuz aye a favourit wi' her. Whun A wuz at my brekfast that mornin' she seen there wuz sumthin' wrang, an' sez she—

"What ails ye, Rabin?"

"Naethin', ma," sez I.

"There's sumthin'," ses she.

"No very muckle," sez I.

"It's mair than ordinar whun it puts ye frae eatin'," sez she.

"A'll tell ye efter a bit," sez I, "whun they a' gang oot."

An' so A did. My, she lauched at me ower ocht, but whun she heerd aboot Betty pittin' me oot she wuznae weel pleesed, an' sez she—

"Lee it tae me, Rabin, an' A'll mak' it a' richt."

"Weel, ma, dinnae be lang," sez I. An' nether she wuz.

Afore nicht her an' my da baith went up till Betty Mewhunyee's, an' whun they cum back A seen by my ma's e'e that it wuz a'richt,

an' so it wuz. A niver kent hoo they set aboot it, but they persuaded auld Betty tae consent tae the match, on condeeshin that A wud leev there an' no sayperate Peggy an' her while she leeved.

A'll niver forget the scene whun A went up that nicht. A steppit in lauchin,' an' sez I—

"Betty, A hope the beesom's no' neer ye."

"Oh, ye rogue, ye!" sez she, "ye wud provoke a saint." Then she lauched, an' sez she—

"Peggy's doon the hoose there, ye can gang an' gie her anither leason."

An' so A did. My ain Peggy! My, this coortin's a quer thing! Sum fowks' made fur yin anither, an' it wud been weel fur ithers they had niver met. But nether Peggy nor me regrets the day we met, an' it mak's me feel young agen as A tell ye, efter my ain fashun, aboot

PEGGY, AN' HOO A COORTED HER.

WEE WULLY.

IN my young days A niver likeit waens, an' A used tae wunner hoo onybuddy cud be bothered wi' them. Sum wae or ither, nae metter what's neglected in the hoose, the waen maun aye be lukit efter an' attendit till like a lord. A'll ashair ye they wudnae a got muckle attendance frae me. Sam Forgyson an' me used tae rin terbly thegither, an' A hae min' that A wuz rael vexed whun Sam got merried, an' it wuz a guid while afore A cud luk at his mistress ava, for he wuz that muckle taen on wi' her that him an' me seldom seen yin anither. Hooaniver, A begood tae drap in noo an' agen till see him, an' hae a bit crack aboot auld times, an' dae ye know but A begood no' tae think sae hard o' his mistress, fur she wuz a rael, kin'-hearted, smert, clean, throogaun buddy. Weel, by an' by, a wee Forgyson made its appearance, an' A niver dislikit waens as muckle as A did then. Ony time that A went in, Sarah Jane—that wuz Mistress Forgyson's name—wud cum rinnin' forrit wi' the waen in her erms, an' she wud say—

"Hae, Rabin, fin' the wecht o' that fellow."

"Weel, A wud hae tae tak' him in my erms, but A aye hel' him as far aff me as possible, an' A wud say—

"My! the wecht o' him's ower ocht!"

"Tak' a stool an' sit doon, an' nurse him a bit till A get Sam's supper ready," she wud say.

Weel, A wud a din onything for Sam, an' so A wud sit doon an' haud the waen on my knee as if he wuz a bit o' gingerbreid, an' as shair as he lukit intil my face he wud burst oot roarin'. A cud a fun' in my heart tae a nippit him!

"Sing till him, Rabin," sez Sarah Jane.

"Hoo cud A sing till him?" sez I.

"Weel he likes tae heer the tangs jingellin'," sez she.

My, if ye had seen me sittin' like a fool jingellin' the tangs agen the hearthstane till A had the wee crater lauchin' ower ocht. Then he wud stick his dirty wee fists agen my shirt breest, an' mony a time A hae seen him drappin' his breed an' traycle on my nice chackit breeks, an' the traycley side wuz aye doon. A cud jist a chukit him aback o' the fire! He kent the luk o' my face rael weel, an' if iver A grew the leest bit cross like, he wud a puckered up his face an' yelled as if A had been stickin' pins in him. Then Sally wud a drappit whativer she wuz at, whuppit the waen aff my knee, an' gied him a wheen pitches up richt aboon her heid, till money a time the licht left my e'en, for A thocht he wud fa' on the fluir, an' get his brains knockit oot. Hooaniver, she cud catch him like a ba', an' ivery fling she gied him she wud cry, "Kitchy, kitchy, kaw!"

She very suin had him lauchin,' an' then she wud wipe his nose an' e'en, and clap him on my knee agen. A cud a seen that wuman far eneuch!

But A did think a rael peety o' Sam. There he wud cum in, tired efter a hard day's work, an' stervin' wi' hunger intil the bargen, an' he wud luk roon him, an' say—

"Weel, Sally, ony wurd o' the supper?"

"Ay, Sam, A'll jist hae it reddy in a minit," sez she.

"Wumman, A'm jist drappin' aff my feet," sez Sam.

"Weel A wud a had it reddy only for that waen," sez she.

Then, whun the tay wuz a pourin' oot, gie an' affen there wuz nae milk, an' her nixt cry wud be—

"My, that waen hasnae left me a drap o' milk!" An' so Sam wud ether hae tae tak' his tay the way it wuz, or sit till Sally wud gang an' milk the goat. In fact, nae metter what gied wrang,

that waen wuz aye blamed wi' it, an' dae ye know but it made me far waur agenst the wee things than A had been afore.

But its wonnerfu' hoo a buddy feels whun they hae a waen o' their ain. My, it bates ocht! There wuznae a happier nor a prooder man in the hale toonland nor mysel' whun wee Wully cum. Whun Peggy an' me got merried A thocht A had nae mair tae wush for, an' life was anither thing a'thegither. My, the very sun lukit brichter, my wark wuz a pleezhyer tae me, an' naethin' wuz a bother. But whun wee Wully wuz put intil my erms, an' whun a lukit intil his clear blue e'en, an' seen what a helpless wee thing he wuz, A deklare A jist felt my heart growin' bigger like, an' whaur there had only been room for Peggy afore, there wuz room noo for baith her an' wee Wully. A cudnae a believed it if onybuddy had a tell't me it aforehand, an' A begood tae think that it wud be nae truble till me tae wait fur my tay, or tae tak' it wi'oot milk ether, for the waen's sake. But sich a thing niver happened, an' it wuznae lang till A begood till see there wuz a quer odds in weemen. An' there is a quer difference in weemen. Jist as muckle as there is atween a man-o'-war an' a weshin' tub! Whun A wud a went hame in the evenin's, wee Wully wud ether a been soun' asleep, or else Peggy wud a had him sittin' in his creddle shakin' a wee tin rattely, an' lauchin' ower ocht. A aye wantit tae tak' him on my knee while A wuz at my meat, but Peggy wudnae hear tell o't. She said it wuz a bad fashun tae learn waens, an' that it kept fowk frae gettin' ony guid o' their males.

Weel, that waen thriv ower ocht, an' he wuz the wireyest crayter iver ye seen. Afore he wuz a twal-month auld he wud a waukened me in the mornin's stickin' his wee fat fingers intil my e'en, or he wud a put his mooth till my ear, and cried "Goo-oo-oo." My, but Peggy wuz the prood wuman whun his first teeth begood tae shew. She met me at the daur that day wi' the waen in her erms, as A cummed in for my denner, an' sez she—

"Luk, Rabin, luk, a nice wee tootle!" Then she huggit that waen in her erms till A thocht she wud a smothered him, an' sez she—

"Luvins on my wee pet! My wee Wully, och, bit him'll be the fine wee man whun a' him's tootles cums. Noo, sit in yer ain wee creddle till da gits his denner."

"Hae ye tried him wi' a pritta yet, Peggy?" sez I.

"Haud yer tongue, Rabin," sez she, "hoo cud a waen like that eat a pritta?"

"Ye cudnae gie him a better thing tae try his teeth on," sez I, lauchin'. A did tak' sum quer rises oot o' Peggy aboot that waen.

He begood tae sook his fingers, an' A had maist sayrious bother pittin' him aff that. If ye had a let him, he wud a sut for hooers wi' his wee thoom in his mooth sooken awa as if his life dependit on it, an' sayin' till himsel', "Nyum, nyum, nyum."

"Dinnae sook yer finger, Wully; dinnae dae that like a guid waen," A wud say, but A micht as weel a hel' my tongue. A tried iverything A cud think on tae brek him aff it. Furst A bocht him shugar candy and yellow man, but efter he rocht wi' that a while, he wud a flung it at the cat, an' in wi' his thoom agen. At last A rubbit bitter yallaways on his fingers, an' A think that cured him. But my! it maist brauk Peggy's heart tae heer him roarin' whun he tasted the yallaways, and A deklare but he cud pucker up his face till ye wudnae a kent yin bit o' him, and his wee unner lip wud a trimmled ower ocht.

Weel, he cud a trevilled wi' a grup o' yer han' when he wuz a yeer auld, an' it wuznae a crack efter that till he wuz rinnin' aboot the hoose wi'oot yin o' us touchin' him. A did pit in the times o' it nursin' him, an' lernin' him tae talk. The furst wurd he said wuz "ma," an' whun A wud a said tae him—

"Whaur's yer ma, Wully? Shake yer heid at ma, Wully," the wee rogue he wud a lukit strecht at Peggy, an' waggit his heid at her. Then A tried tae lern him tae say "da," but it tuk me a lang time. A wud gar him stan' up on my knee, an' A wud tell him, "Say 'da,' Wully."

Then he wud pu' my whusker, an' lauch, an' say—"Ga—ga."

He got the tongue rael fast, an' afore lang he wud a met me at the daur an' gruppit me by the han' an' say till me—

"Tum, da, tum; dennay 'eddy."

It's wonnerfu' hoo waens dae get on. He wuz aboot twa yeer auld at this time, an' he wuz growin' as fast as iver he cud. An' then the noshuns o' him, an' the tricks o' him bate ocht. He wuz terble fond o' traycle, an' nae odds hoo cross he had been, if ye had jist a set him doon a tinfu' o' it, ye wudnae a heerd a wurd oot o' him fur lang eneuch. He wud a stuck his twa fists intil it, an' sut an' lickit them fur hooers. Then there wuz nae toy pleesed him as

well as my watch, an' it ansered as weel that she wuz gie an' strong. He wud a dunnered that watch agen the hearthstane as if it had been a hemmer he had in his han', an' A cud shew ye till this day whaur he brauk a peece oot o' the case o' her. The bigger he got he grew the trickier, an' it tuk us a' oor time tae watch him. Yin day he wuz sailin' wee bits o' sticks fur boats in the linthole, an' in he tumbled. If Sam Forgyson hadnae been passin' at the time that wud a been the end o' wee Wully. It made us far fander o' him than we had been afore, an' nae metter what he din we niver had the heart tae gie him a lickin.' Yin day he tied the tin taypot till the dug's tail, an' the puir brute tuk the country as if he had been mad. Then he tormented the cat at sich a rate that she had his han's an' face a' scrabbit. He wuz the greatest yung clip A iver cum across, but raelly A cud not fin' in my heart tae be angry wi' him, an' dae ye know but A hae mony a time thocht that the fowk haes themsel's tae blame fur their waens no' turnin' oot richt. Ye see they restrict them in this thing an' the tither; they'll no' let them gang here, an' they'll no' let them gang there, an' they'll mak' them sit wi' lang faces on them as if it wuz a sin tae lauch, till the waens ir mair like auld men an' weemen nor ocht else. Then whun they grow up an' get awa oot o' their fowks' sicht they get intil a' soarts o' mischief, an' in my opeenyin the faut's no' theirs. A hae seen waens that wud rin an' hide themsel's whun they heerd their da's fit, an' if they had been eatin' at the same table, they wud a been afeerd till a luckit up, bit A'll ashair ye nane o' my waens wur that wae. Frae iver yin o' them kent me, the minit they seen me they wud a jumpit tae get till me, an' lauched ower ocht. Peggy an' me likit oor waens, an' A hae heerd fowk sayin' that it's a sin tae be ower fand o' them. A dinnae beleev sich a thing, an' nae man or wuman cud be ower fand o' their waens. Sum fowk wull tell ye whun a waen dees that it wuz tuk frae ye acause ye thocht ower muckle o' it. I niver heerd sich blethers! Him that sent the waens mak's us like them, an' A cudnae bring mysel' tae say the things aboot Providence that A heer sum fowk cumin' aff wi'.

Puir wee Wully! If iver a waen wuz likit by his da an' ma it wuz him. He's a big man noo, neerly a heid heecher nor mysel', an' yet A aye luk on him as the wee clatterin' thing that A used tae tak' by the han' an' lead aboot the fiel's lukin' fur birds' nests, or amang the oothouses whun A wud be feedin' the kye an' pigs,

Mony a lang crack Peggy an' me had aboot what we wud mak' him, whun the meinister used tae lay his han' on his heid an' tell us that he wud be a grate man sum day. That's jist a wae they hae wi' them, mair espayshally if they're lukin' efter subscriptions fur ocht. Peggy wantit me tae mak' him a skolard, but A wud aye say till her—

"Na, Peggy; it wud be a peety tae spoil him."

"Agh, Rabin, hoo wud that spoil him?" sez she.

"Peggy," sez I, "wud ye like yer ain waen tae pass ye by in the street if he met ye?"

She hung her heid.

"Weel, that's yin thing eddykaishin diz fur fowk, Peggy; they grow ashamed o' the auld buddies that toiled tae get fur them what they niver got themsels, an' A'm no in terble luv wi' the ways an' menners o' the maist o' the eddykaited fowk A see."

"Oh, Rabin, yer ower hard on them," sez she, "ye ken richtly there's guid kin' fowk amang the weel lerned."

"That's very true, Peggy, but they wur born wi' guid kin' hearts, an' eddykaishin wull niver mak' muckle odds in fowk's naters; it may pit a bit polish on them, but ye cannae mak' a silk purse oot o' a soo's lug."

"Weel, Rabin, A wud like wee Wully tae get the book lernin'," sez she.

"A'll sen' him tae skule," sez I, "an' get him teached tae read an' write an' dae a bit coontin', but that's a', Peggy; he'll be the richt man ta haud a plew, an' as A said afore it wud be a peety tae spoil him. Luk at his uncle Wully, that he's ca'd fur; it wuz the book learnin' made him gang tae wanner the wurl."

"Weel, weel, Rabin, ye ken best," she wud say, an' puir buddy, she seldom tries tae contradict me. An' it jist turned oot as A said. There's no' a better fermer in Bellycuddy than oor Wully, an' it's nae langer ago nor last week that he tuk the furst prize at a plewin' match. He's merried noo, an' haes a snug hoose o' his ain, but he gie an' affen cums tae see the auld fowk, an' if it wuz only twa or three fresh eggs, or a prent o' butter, he wud hae sumthin' fur his ma! My! she kens his fit as weel as she dis mine, an' lang afore A can heer him, her face wull brichten up, and she'll say—fur we aye ca' him by his auld name—

"RABIN, YONNER'S WEE WULLY!"

THE COLORADO BEETLE.

A SUPPOAS ye min' the time there wuz sich a sough throo the country aboot the Culleradoo Beetle that fowk said wud cleen destroy the pritta crap.

Weel, A wuz sittin' at my denner yin day whun Wully Kirk, o' Bellycuddy, cum rinnin' in, a' oot o' breath. A cudnae speek tae him at the minnit, for my mooth was fu', but Peggy spauk oot, an' sez she, "Is there ocht wrang, Wullie? Is the goat deid?" Ye ken Wullie's goat fell aff the dyke an' hurt itsel' badly an' it's no like tae leev.

"Na, wuman, it's no that," quoth Wullie; it's mebbe waur nor that, fur as A wuz cumin' oot o' the toon there, A saw Mr. Bunt, the megistrate, an' the sergint o' the pileece, an' three o' his men cumin' oot here, an' there's a hale crowd o' fowk wi' them."

"They're no' cumin' here," sez I; "what cud they want here?"

"Heth, A dinnae ken," sez Wullie; "but A thocht A wud rin on afore them an' tell ye."

Peggy glowered at me as if she wud a put her een through me; an' sez she—

"Rabin, A doot ye hae been daein' sumthin'."

"Sorra thing hae A been daein'," sez I, "that A care three straws wha kens; but speek oot, Wullie," sez I, "an' if ye ken ocht aboot it let us hear it."

"Weel, weel," sez he, "A dinnae like tae tell ye, but A'm feer'd ye're blamed wi' stealin' sumthin,' fur A heerd them sayin' they wur lukin' fur a beetle, an' that there wuz yin had been seen aboot your hoose."

Puir Peggy wuz struck speechless. It taks a guid dale tae deprive her o' the use o' her tongue, but she lost it fairly that time.

"Wullie, my man," sez I, "it's a terble thing tae be hard o' hearin'"—ye ken Wullie's near deaf—"'bad heerin' mak's bad rehearsin',' but A ken noo what it is."

"Weel, an' am A wrang?" sez Wullie.

"Of coorse, ye ir," sez I; "did ye no heer aboot the gran' bazaar they're gaun tae hae tae rise money for a hall, an' they're gaun through the country getherin' up a' the auld anshent things they can get a haud o', an' A'll be bound," sez I, "they hae heerd

tell o' my auld grannie's beetle that haes been in the femily for generations, an' it's it they're efter. A wudnae like tae pert wi' it, but they're welcum tae the loan o' it. There it is hingin' up a-hint the daur. Na, it's no," sez I, as A got up tae reach it doon, an' saw it wuznae there. "A'm sayin' Peggy, whaur's the beetle? Can it no' be had jest whun it's wantit?"

"Ah, dinnae bother me aboot yer beetle," sez Peggy, wringin' her han's an' rockin' hersel' back an' forrit on a stool, "what dae ye think they wud want yer beetle fur? Oh, Rabin, ye hae bin daein' sumthin'! ye hae bin daein' sumthin', Rabin, fur a dreamed last nicht"—

"Haud yer tongue aboot yer dreams," sez I, "an' start tae yer feet an' luk fur the beetle, an' dinnae apen yer mooth till ye get it. There's no sich anither beetle in the hale country side; A'm tell't they beetled champ wi' it in the time o' King Wulyim the Third, an' my granny brauk the skull o' a Croppy wi' it the time o' the rebellion."

"Hae ye fun' the beetle yit, Peggy?" says I; but she wuz that sulky she wudnae answer me.

"Did you see the beetle, dear?" sez I tae wee Paddy—that's my granwaen, ye ken, that leevs wi' us—"did you see the beetle, Paddy?"

"Iss, da"—he ca's me da, puir wee fellow—"Iss' da," sez he, "me seed the beetle 'isterday."

"Did ye, dear," sez I, "an' what did ye dae wi' it? Whaur did ye pit it, dear?"

"Me dunno," sez he, stickin' his dirty wee fists intae his e'en, an' beginnin' tae greet.

"Dinnae roar, dear," sez I, "A'm no' angry wi' ye, but A dae wush A cud fin' the beetle."

Jest as A said the words there wuz a knock at the daur, an' A gathered mysel' up an' apened it. Behold ye, but A cud harly believe my e'en. There wuz Tam Boal, the postman, standin' haudin' a horse by the bridle, an' there wuz auld Jamey Menyarry, wi' his big lang-tail'd coat on him, stanin' aside him pointin' at oor hoose; an' sich a crowd o' folk niver wuz at Rabin Gordon's afore in my day. Mr. Bunt, the megistrate, wuz awa doon the road a piece, an' there wuz a wheen o' men roon him wi' lumps o' cudgels in their han's, as if they had cum oot tae hunt rats. Whun A apened the daur the pileeceman steppit in.

"That's a brave sort o' a day," sez I.

"It is," sez the pileeceman, "jist a brave day. I'm sorry tae disturb ye," sez he, "but did ye see ony word o' a beetle?"

"Tae be shair," sez I, "we hae had a beetle here this guid while."

He steppit back then, an' A heerd him tellin' the sergint that A said A had a beetle, and the sergint then went up an' said sumthin' tae the megistrate, an' he cum steppin' forrit tae the daur.

"Weel, my guid man," sez he, "let us see this beetle."

"A'm sorry tae tell ye, sir," sez I, "that A cannae fin' it jest noo, an' A hae been lukin' for it iver since A heerd ye wur cumin' oot."

Then A turned roun' tae Peggy an' cried oot—

"Peggy, hae ye fun' the beetle yet?"

"A hope it hasnae escapit," sez Mr. Bunt.

"Na, it cudnae weel escape," sez I, "for A keep a string tied tae the en' o' it; an' it wuz here at denner time yisterday, for wee Paddy wuz lickin' the champ aff it."

Some o' the fellows begood tae cheer an' laugh at me, an' the sergint cumin' up tae me, sez tae me,

"Rabin, what blethers ir ye talkin'?"

But jist at that minnit Peggy cum oot o' the daur, an' sez she,

"Wee Paddy says he saw it at the pritta field!"

"That's the very place it's likely tae be," sez the megistrate, an' wi' that he jumpit on his horse, an' aff he went at a canter nixt the big pritta' fiel', an' the pileece an' the ither fellows efter him.

By this time a wheen o' the nybers had gathered tae see what wuz wrang, an' A declare if A cud tell whuch end o' me wuz up.

"Is there onythin' the metter?" sez auld Jack M'Coubrey, pooin' the big skin cap aff his ears tae hear what we wur talkin' aboot.

"There maun be sumthin'," sez I, "but A dinnae ken what it is; A think the folk's gaun mad."

"Luk what they're daein!" sez Tam Shaw; "if they're no' champin' an' smashin' ower yer guid pritta field!"

"As shair as daith they ir," sez I, "an' A'll no' stand that!"

So aff A run as hard as A cud, an' the first fellow A laid hould o' wuz slashin' awa' wi' a stick amang the pritta taps, but A gied him a wipe on the lug that he'll no' forget this month; an' A gied the nixt yin a push that sent him intae the sheugh.

"That's a quer way tae luk for a beetle!" sez I; "dae ye think A'm no' fit tae fin' it mysel'? Clear oot o' this ivery yin o' ye! What in the naine o' common-sense dae ye mean?"

"Calm yersel', my guid man," sez Mr. Bunt; "we believe the beetle tae be concealed here an' feedin' on yer crap, an' if we shud destroy the hale fiel' we'll fin' oot if it's here."

"Concealed!" sez I; "it's naethin' o' the soart! What wud A hide it for? The waen haes left it here an' forgot it; but, *feedin'* did ye say? *A beetle feedin'!* A niver heerd the like o' that afore. Save my heart, a'm A sleepin' or waukin'?"

"A'm beginnin' tae think ye niver saw the beetle," sez the sergint; "cud ye tell us the colour o' it?"

"It wuz a kind o' a dirty yellow," sez I.

"Wi' black stripes?" sez he.

"Oh, deed, it had mony a black mark on it," sez I, "an' so wud you, sergint, if ye had been as muckle knocked aboot."

"Wuz it full grown?" sez the megistrate.

"Weel, sir, A dinnae ken," sez I, "but it wuz as big as ony beetle A hae seen."

Jest wi' that Peggy cum rinnin' oot, wavin' the beetle roon' her heed an' shoutin'—

"A hae fun' the beetle! A hae fun' the beetle!"

"Whaur, whaur is it?" cries the megistrate, an' "Whaur, whaur is it?" cries the pileece, an' there they wur, haudin' up their heeds an' glowerin' in the air as if it wuz a bird they wur watchin'.

"Here it is!" sez I, takin' it oot o' Peggy's han' an' stickin' it in the sergint's; "it wud make a richt baton fur ye; ye're welkim tae the loan o' it, but dinnae loas it, fur it haes been in oor femily fur generations."

Weel, ye wud a lauched if ye had seen them. Mr. Bunt jumpit aff his horse an' hoult his sides an' lauched; an' the pileece had tae slacken their belts, while the ragamuffins yelled an' flung up their sticks an' caps like wild Indians.

It wuz a guid while afore they cud get me tae unnerstand them. It appeared that sum kin' o' a thing ca'd a "Culleradoo beetle" wuz cumin' frae Amerikay tae eat up a' the prittaes, an' that the pileece had yin o' them in a cage at the berricks, but it had flew awa' an' sumbuddy tell't them it wuz seen aboot my hoose.

Weel, A tell't the pileece that there wuznae a word o' truth in it, but that A wud luk through the prittaes mysel', an' if A started the thing A wud try tae catch it.

THE VEGETARIANS.

MY! wunners wull niver cease, an' A cum across yin o' the oddest things lately that iver A heerd tell o' in my life. A wuz up in Bilfaust yin day, an' A went intil a coffee-hoose tae get sumthin' tae eat, an' jist as A wuz sittin' doon in a nice wee place that's a' boxed up in yin o' the corners, who shud cum in but a fine dacent well-tae-dae man, a Mister Teelinson, belanging' tae Bilfaust, that A ken richtly, an' sez he, haudin' oot his hand', sez he—

"Why, Rabin! Is't possible yer here? An' what way ir ye?"

"A'm in guid helth," sez I, "but A'm stervin' wi' hunger."

"That's jist the kin' o' fowk they want here," sez he.

Wi' that a nice black-haired lass cum in, an' axed us what we wud hae.

My freen spauk the furst, an' said he wud tak sum coffay wi' broon breid an' butter.

"An' what'll you hae, sir?" sez she, lukin' at me, an' lauchin'.

Sez I, "Dochter, A'll tak the same, but ye micht bring me a plate o' roast beef."

"You like a *lerge* plate, A believe," sez she.

"Weel, A'm no sae parteekler aboot the *plate* as A em aboot what ye put on it," sez I, an' awa she went lauchin'.

"Rabin, my freen," sez Mister Teelinson, "ye'll hae tae quat eatin' meat."

A lukit at him fur a wee minit, an' then sez I—

"Yer jokin', Mr. Teelinson."

"A em not, indeed," sez he. "It's very bad fur ye."

"Weel, A'll admit," sez I, "in aboot twunty minits frae noo that it wud not be guid fur me tae tak muckle mair, but jist noo, Mr. Teelinson, A feel as if A cud eat my auld boots."

Jist as A said that the coffay an' ither things cum in, an' the young lady went oot an' sneckit the daur efter her.

A had taen a gie erly brekfast that mornin', an' A dae think A niver felt as hungry in a' my life, so A fell tae my beef in ernest, an' my freen begood tae his broon breid an' butter, an' sez he tae me, sez he—

" Rabin, A'm vexed tae see ye eatin' that beef."

" What fur ? " sez I.

" Becase it'll dae ye herm," sez he.

" Nae fear o' that," sez I, " there's no' that muckle o' it ; man, the fowk in these kin' o' places kens better what we need than we dae oursels, an' if what we get diz us herm it'll no' be on accoont o' the size o' it."

He lauched whun A said that.

" Wull A order a bit fur ye ? " sez I.

" Na," sez he, " A hae quat eatin' meat a' thegither."

Weel, A wuz that thunnerstruck, that A wuz neer chokit, an' a drappit my knife an' fork, an' jist sut glowerin' at him. The idea o' a man sayin' he had quat eatin' an' him walkin' intil the breid an' butter as if he hadnae seen meat fur a month !

" Puir man ! " sez I to mysel', " he's gaun wrang in the min'. A jist thocht he wuz workin' ower hard, an' gettin' on ower weel in the wurl, an' A see it's turnin' him in the heid."

A deklare it tuk awa my appetite !

Weel, A seen that he wuz waitin' fur me tae say sumthin', an' so sez I tae him—

" An' hoo dae ye fin' that tae agree wi' ye ? "

" Man, A niver wuz better," sez he. " A fin' mysel' gettin' lichter ivery day," sez he.

" A dinnae doot it yin bit," sez I. " A dinnae ken ocht that wud mak a man get licht as fast as tae quat takin' meat."

" Rabin," sez he, " A'm anither man a'thegither since ye seen me last."

" Puir man," sez I tae mysel' ; " A doot ye ir ; my ! it's a peety o' the mistress an' waens."

" Weel, Mister Teelinson," sez I, " hoo lang is't since ye quat takin' meat ? "

" A haenae tastit it," sez he, " fur aboot three weeks."

A deklare but that knocked me cleen speechless, an' whun A seen that he wuz sae far bye himsel', A begood tae feel no' very comfortable. The idea o' a man sittin' stuffin' himsel' like a pin-cushion, an' tellin' me tae my bare face that he hadnae tasted meat fur three weeks ! Sez I tae mysel', " Bliss me, the man's clean astray, an' A had better no cross him, or he'll mebbe get ootraijus."

A had finished my beef by that time, an' he had din wi' his coffay, so A pickit up a' the knives, an' exemined them as if A wuz

lukin' fur the meker's name; then A slippit them doon alow the table, an' laid them on the sate beside me, "fur," sez I tae mysel', there's nae knowin' what he micht dae."

"Weel, an' what diz yer mistress say aboot ye?" sez I.

"Oh, she's very weel pleesed," sez he.

"It'll tak a guid dale less tae keep the hoose noo," sez I.

"It diz that," sez he, "an' A'm in great hopes that my wife wull quat the meat tae."

"Wunners wull niver cease," sez I.

"We're gaun tae form a society," sez he, "an' afore lang, Rabin, my man, half the fowk in the toon wull be like me."

"Man, deer," sez I, "but that wull bring doon the merkets; dinnae dae ocht mair till A get my craps turned intil money."

"Why," sez he, "ye'll get better prices fur yer craps than iver ye did; but A wud advise ye tae quat rearin' pigs," sez he, "fur efter a while naebuddy wud luk at them."

Sez I, "Peggy wud brek her heart if she hadnae a wheen o' pigs tae wurk amang; but A'll tell her what ye say, Mr. Teelinson. Wud ye alloo me tae keep ony heifers?" sez I.

"Oh, tae be shair," sez he; "the milk an' butter wull aye be usefu'."

"No' if the fowk quat eatin'," sez I.

"Quat eatin'!" sez he. "A think yer doatin', Rabin.

He begood tae fidget aboot on his sate as if he wuz lukin' fur sumthin', and sez I tae mysel', "A wush sumbuddy wud cum in, fur he's takin' some ither turn, an' deer knows what he'll dae nixt."

"A doot ye dinnae unnerstan' me," sez he.

"A doot no'," sez I, "but A maun gang awa."

"Oh, tak' yer time," sez he, an' he put his han' intil his coat pockit. "A wud like," sez he, "tae mak ye a *vegetaryan* afore ye gang awa."

A niver felt as quer in a' my life, an' the hair wuz like tae stan' on my heid. A lukit doon tae see that the knives wur oot o' his reech, an' the licht begood tae dance afore my e'en. "In the name o' a' that's wunnerfu'," thinks I, "but what's a *vegetaryan?*" At a time like that it bates a', the thochts that come intil a buddy's heid; an' A had min' o' my son-in-law tellin' me aboot a man they ca'd *Joopiter*, in auld times, that cud turn himsel' an' ither fowk intil beasts or ocht he likit; an' thinks I, "Noo, Mister Teelinson haes been readin' aboot Joopiter, an' it's wurkin' in his min'."

At last A determined tae speak tae him sayriesly, but afore A said ocht A gruppit the wee brass hannel o' the daur an' apened it, so that if onything shud happen A wud be reddy tae cry for help.

"Mr. Teelinson," sez I, "wull ye tell me what ye mean? Shair A niver did ye ony herm in my life, an' what wud ye dae *that* on me for?"

"Dae what?" sez he.

"Mak me a *vegetaryan*," sez I.

"Why, man," sez he, "it's fur yer ain guid."

"Cum awa," sez I, "till A see aboot gettin' ye sent hame, fur yer no weel."

"There's naething wrang wi' me," sez he.

"Weel, what's a *vegetaryan?*" sez I.

"It's a man that eats nae beef," sez he.

A seen it a' in a minit, an' A drappit doon on my sate an' burst oot a lauchin'.

"A wush ye had said that at furst," sez I, "fur A niver got sich a scaur in a' my life."

"What wae," sez he.

"Why," sez I, "sittin' there afore my een stuffin' yersel', an' tellin' me at the same time that ye hadnae tasted meat fur three weeks."

"A meent flesh meat," sez he.

"Weel A ken that noo," sez I, "but luk whaur A hid the knives, fur A thocht ye wur mad, an' A didnae ken what ye micht dae."

A niver heerd him lauchin' as hearty in a' my days.

"Rabin, Rabin," sez he, as suin as he cud speek, "mony a lauch ye hae gien me, but this is the heartiest yin iver A had in my life."

He lauched sae lood that twa o' the young lasses cum rinnin' forrit, an' sez yin o' them, sez she—

"Wur ye callin' me, sur?"

"Weel, deer," sez I, "ye micht bring us twa mair cups o' coffay," an' then sez I tae Mister Teelinson, sez I—

"Ye maun drink anither cup wi' me, an' tell me mair aboot this vegetaryan bizness."

"Weel, ye'll no' hide the knives this time," sez he, an' he fell tae the lauchin' agen.

Whun the coffay cum in, A shut the wee daur agen, an' sez I—

"Weel, Mister Teelinson, A want tae heer exackly what a vegetaryan is."

"Weel," sez he, "it's a man that neither eats fish, flesh, nor fowl."

"Oh," sez I, "A doot that's a sin."

"What wae?" sez he.

"Tae refuse guid meat that's made fur us," sez I.

"It's my belief," sez he, "that naethin' but vegetables wur iver intended to be eaten by man."

"Weel, fur my pert," sez I, "A wudnae like tae be fed on cabbage an' curly kail."

"There's mair sorts o' vegetables than that," sez he.

"A niver heerd ocht else ca'd vegetables," sez I, "unless mebbe turnips, an' they wudnae be terble guid feedin' for onybuddy."

"Man," sez he, "a vegetaryan can leev on the very best."

"Hoo diz that cum?" sez I; "tell me what they can eat."

"Carrots, turnips, prittaes, peas, harrycuts, cabbage, onions, epples, oranges, grapes, wheat, flooer, parritch, an' a hunner things that A cannae min' jest noo," sez he.

"But what'll ye dae wi' a' the kye an' pigs, an' goats, an' ither things that we eat?" sez I.

"Keep as mony kye an' goats as ye like," sez he, "fur the mair milk an' butter ye eat the better; but as fur pigs," sez he, "they shud be a' destroyed aff the face o' the earth."

"What fur?" sez I.

"They're uncleen animals," sez he, "an' no' fit fur human food."

"A'll admit that they're dirty things," sez I, "an' as thrawin' as a dug's hin' leg, but whun a piece o' yin o' them's weel cooked an' set on the table wi' a big dish o' boiled cabbage, nae mortal man cud stan' agenst it."

"That's a' blethers," sez he, "an' forbye that," sez he, "the meat that a man eats gangs tae form a pert o' his buddy; the man that eats muckle fish wull be fishy, an' the man that eats muckle pig wull be piggy."

"Then," sez I, "the man that eats muckle kail wull be *curly*."

He lukit hurt a wee bit.

"Weel, ye maun excuse me," sez I, "fur the hale thing luks sae odd an' funny that A cannae help lauchin', an' the nixt time A'm up in Bilfast we'll hae a lang crack aboot it."

"Very weel," sez he, "but in the meantime," sez he, "A wud advise ye tae gie it a trial. You that leevs in the cuntry haes a richt guid appertunity, an' ten chances tae yin but ye'll leev twunty yeers langer."

Sez I, "Mr. Teelinson, A think A'll try it, but A doot Peggy'll no' be content; hooaniver, A'll talk tae her aboot it."

A thocht aboot this the hale road hame, an' made up my min' tae see hoo the thing wud wurk.

A wuz wat an' hungery when A got hame. Peggy had on a great big fire o' bleezin' peats, the kettle was boilin' an' the tay things wur on the table.

"Rabin, deer, yer cleen loast," sez she, "an' A'm shair yer stervin', but A hae a nice bit o' steak fur yer tay that'll mak ye a' richt."

Weel, what cud A say? In less time nor it wud tak me tae tell ye the steak wuz in the pan, an' the smell o' it wuz eneuch tae drive a hungery man daft. Sez I tae mysel', "A'll no' be a vegetaryun the nicht; A'll wait till the morrow."

Ther's nae pert o' a coo that A like sae weel as the steak, an' mony a lang luk A tuk at that yin, thinkin' it wud be my last.

Nixt mornin' A wuz oot diggin' prittaes afore Peggy wuz up, an' whun she cried me in fur my brekfast she had a dish o' bacon an' eggs on the table that made my teeth rin water.

Sez I tae mysel', "A wush Mr. Teelinson jist had twa sniffs o' that; he wud be a vegetaryun nae langer!"

Weel, A did mak' the attempt tae be a vegetaryun, but, man deer, it wuz the sair, sair trial on my patience, an' it made me the lauchin' stock of Ballycuddy. A used tae rage an' scould aboot puir auld Eve eaten the epples in the Gerden o' Eden, an' bringing' sich bother an' trouble upon a' that has come efter her, but A'll niver say anither wurd aboot her as lang as A'm a leevin' man. A see it's human natur tae be wantin' the very thing that ye shudnae tuch. The time wuz whun ye micht hae set on yer table the nicest piece o' roast beef that iver seen a fire, or the fattest hen that iver pickit corn, an' A wud har'ly a thocht it worth lukin' at, but na suiner had A begood tae think aboot quattin' the meat that there cum a langin' an' a hungerin' on me fur it, till A deklare but if A had seen anither man eatin' a bit o' beef, A think A wud hae snappit it oot o' his han'. It bates a' the contraryness o' human natur!

What helpit tae mak things waur wuz that A keep the best cook in a' Ballycuddy, an' that's Peggy. Man, if it wuz but a herrin' she cud mak ye beleev ye wur eatin' a salmon, an' there's nae doot but the half o' yer meat's in the wae it's made reddy. Ye'll see some weemin an' if they dae ye a bit rassher it's burned tae a shunner, an' tae save their lives they cudnae boil a wheen prittaes richt, but that's no' the sort o' Peggy.

Weel, yin Sunday mornin'—an' the better day the better deed—as A wuz pittin' on my claes A made up my min' that A shud gie the thing a trial, an' nae time like the praisent.

A went oot tae the byre an' gied the kye a drink an' some fother; then A threw a lock o' hay tae the auld meer, an' by the time A had din a wheen o' wee odds an' ends here an' there an' got back tae the hoose, Peggy wuz bizzin' aboot like a bee, an' had the brekfast reddy.

Behold ye, but talkin' aboot herrin's, Peggy had bocht a wee barrel o' darlin' kippered yins, an' knowin' me tae be fand o' yin noo an' then, there wuz a pair o' them jist tossed up on a plate. Theer niver wuz ocht tuched my feelin's like the smell o' a kippered herrin', an' A sut doon an' had my fork in yin o' them afore ye cud hae coonted ten. But A got nae farder, till Mister Teelinson's words cum intil my heid—

"A vegetaryan is a man that eats nether fish, flesh, nor fowl."

A gied a lang seegh, an' laid doon my knife an' fork, and sez I—

"What a peety it is that a herrin's a fish."

Peggy lukit at me, an' sez she—

"What wud ye like it tae be?"

A made her no answer, but begood tae my tay.

"Cum, Rabin," sez Peggy, "tak up yer herrin' while there's ony heat in it."

"Na, A'll no' min' it this mornin'," sez I.

"Weel, it's as nice a herrin' as iver ye tasted," sez she. "Cum, pit a bit butter on it, an' eat it up."

Man, it vexed me tae see the wae she was walkin' intil her yin.

"Peggy, ye can eat them baith if ye like," sez I, "an' ye micht boil me a couple o' eggs."

"Rabin, A doot yer no' weel," sez she.

"Ah, wuman, A'm richtly," sez I.

"Weel, A niver seen ye refusin' a herrin' afore," sez she, an' awa she bunneld tae boil me the eggs.

Naethin' mair passed while A wuz at my brekfast; but A notised Peggy takin' twa or three gie lang luks at me, an' so A lauched an' clattered awa at the talkin' tae let her see th re wuz naethin' wrang wi' me.

Whun A went tae the meetin' that day what dae ye think but the meenister wuz preachin' aboot hoo sae mony things had been purvided for the use o' man, the fruits o' the erth, an' the fish o' the sea, an' the birds o' the air, an' the beasts o' ivery kin'; an' showed hoo some fowk wudnae eat sum kinds o' flesh, an' what a sin it wuz tae refuse ocht that wuz made for us. This put me in a regular quandary, an' A cudnae for the life o' me get my thochts ony wae collected.

Jist as A turned up the loanin' on my wae hame frae the meetin' A seen wee Paddy, my granwaen, sittin' at the dykeside roarin' as if his heart wud brek.

"What's wrang, my wee man?" sez I, an' A lifted him in my erms an' wipit the tears off his face.

"Mammy's—killed de broon—chucky;—cutted—aff—ur—heid—oh—oh—anee," an' he sabbid like onything.

"An' what did she dae that for, my wee sonny?" sez I.

"Me—dun—no; mammy boiled ur up—in big pot," sez he.

"A'll pye mammy," sez I, an' by that time A wuz at the hoose. The denner wuz reddy, an' whun A threw aff my hat an' coat, an' got sut doon, Peggy handed me a big bowl o' broth, an' sez she, "Rabin, ye'll get nae mair eggs frae the broon chucky."

"Ah, Peggy, ye shudnae hae killed her," sez I, "she wuz a gran' layer, an' wee Paddy's in a sair state aboot her."

"Ye needit a bit o' somethin' nice for yer denner," sez she, "an' it wud be a gie guid hen that A wudnae kill for my auld Rabin."

A' this time A wuz sittin' lukin' at the broth; the steam curlin' up oot o' them tae the very ceilin', an' the smell o' them wuz makin' my teeth rin water.

"They'll be the better o' a wee grain saut," sez Peggy. "an' there's the pepper if ye want it."

A didnae ken what tae say, for A wuz feered o' vexin' Peggy, hooaniver A pushed the broth tae yin side, an' sez I,

"A'll no min' them the day."

"Waen, dear, A doot there's sumthin' the metter wi' ye," sez she.

"Naethin' ava, Peggy, naethin' ava," sez I, "gie me a bit o' butter an' twa or three skerries, an' that'll be a' the denner A'll hae for the day."

"Butter was niver like *that*," sez she, as she laid a leg o' the 'broon chucky,' as wee Paddy ca'd the hen, on my plate; "luk at that noo," sez she, as she laid a big slice o' the breest aside it, "eat that up an' ye'll be a' richt."

"Noo, Peggy," sez I, "dae what A bid ye, like a guid lass, an' dinnae be pittin' me oot o' temper on the Sabbath day; get me a bit butter, an' let the hen lie ower till the morrow."

Peggy said nae mair, but got me the butter, an' A notised that she niver tasted the chucky hersel,' but wee Paddy by this time had forgot a' his trouble an' was pickin' a leg o' his pet hen as cleen as a whusle.

Peggy cleered awa' the denner things and sweepit up the hearth.

"Cum awa' an' sit doon here, Peggy," sez I, "an' A'll tell ye the raison A wudnae taste the hen."

"Wuz it because she wuz wee Paddy's?" sez she.

"Na, indeed it wuz not," sez I, "but A hae made up my min' tae be a vegetaryan."

"What kin' o' a thing's that?" sez she.

Sez I, "a vegetaryan nether eats fish, flesh, nor fowl."

"A wunner what they're like," sez she; "did ye iver see yin, Rabin?"

A lauched at the puir, simple buddy, although, indeed, she wuz nae mair ignerant nor A wuz mysel' yince, an' A wuz gaun tae explain it a' tae her whun the latch wuz lifted, an' in steppit Wully Kirk's wife. A niver seen onybody a disliket as muckle in my life as that wuman; she hings ower the half daur frae mornin' till nicht; she's as fu' o' freets as an eggs fu' o' meat; she gethers up a' the news o' the hale country side, an' a deklare she cud talk a hole in the hearthstane. A aye get oot o' the road whun A see her cumin' in, so A slippit awa' doon the room an' streecht mysel' on the sofa tae tak a doze. The daur wuznae snekit, an' A cud heer the clatterin' o' the twa weemin,' but A wuz ower lazy tae rise, so A jist lay still.

Sally wuz tellin' Peggy aboot Tam Bunt's dug killin' yin o' her dyucks, an' if a' the prayers she prayed lichts on that dug's heid, he'll no' be fit tae kill ony mair dyucks.

Efther a while A heers her sayin' tae Peggy—

"A'm tell't Rabin wuz awa' last week again."

"He wuz that," sez Peggy.

"A dinnae ken hoo he hauds fit tae sich rinnin' aboot," sez Sally, "it wud turn oor Wully in the heid."

"Ay, but dinnae be comparin' your Wully tae my Rabin, if ye pleese," sez Peggy.

"Bravo, Peggy!" sez I tae mysel', "if A wuz neer ye, A wud clap ye on the shooder fur that."

Sally gied a wee dry kin' o' a cough, an' sez she—

"Deed, an' Rabin's no' lukin as weel as he used tae dae."

Puir Peggy's pride fursuk her that minit; A kenned that by her voice as A heerd her sayin'—

"What maks ye say that, Sally?"

If there had been a string tied tae Sally's ear jist then, an' yin en' o' it in my han' A wud a warmed it for her.

"Why, Peggy," sez she, "dae ye no see hoo thin he's growin', an' that he disnae eat neer as muckle as he used tae dae."

A heerd Peggy drawin' her stool across the flair closer tae Sally, an' sez she, in a kin' o' a half whusper, sez she—

"There's some truth in that, Sally, he disnae eat as muckle as that waen there."

"A tell't ye that," sez Sally, "the man haes a forbye luk."

"A kilt the broon chucky that wee Paddy got frae Mistress Rabertson o' the hill heed," sez Peggy, "an' dae ye know but he wudnae lip it."

"He's no' like oor Wully in that onywae," sez Sally.

"An' jist as ye cum in the daur," sez Peggy, "he wuz tellin' me, that he wuz gaun to turn intil a *Hedge-an-tarry-man*."

A thocht A wud a split mysel' tryin' tae keep in the lauchin' whun A heerd that. Puir Peggy, she can niver say a big wurd.

"What in the name o' common sense can that be?" sez Sally.

"A dinnae ken," sez Peggy, "he was gaun tae explain it tae me jist as ye cum in."

"A niver heerd tell o' a *hedge-a-tarry* in my life," sez Sally. "Dae ye think that wuz what he ca'd it?"

"It wuz that as weel as A can min' it," sez Peggy, "but A'm gettin' terble uneasy, Sally; ochone, if ocht wud happen tae my Rabin, what wud A dae?"

" Ye shud bring the doktor or sumbody tae see him," sez Sally, an' then they begood tae talk in whuspers, an' A fell intil a doze, an' heerd nae mair.

Whun A waukened the tay wuz reddy, an' Paddy M'Quillan had cum in. He stappit for his tay, an' him an' me got intil sich a lang crack aboot yin thing an' anither that A forgot a' aboot Sally Kirk an' her fool talk.

The nixt day, jist afore denner time, wha shud cum steppin' in but the meenister. He's a gie cliver man, an' as guid as the maist o' doktors in the wae o' tellin' a buddy what's wrang wi' them, an' what they shud tak fur ony compleent.

" Ye wurnae oot yisterday, Mistress Gordon," sez he.

" Na, sir, A wuz not, but Rabin wuz ; him an' me cannae weel get oot thegither," sez she.

" Weel, Rabin, hoo did ye like my sermin ? " sez he.

" A likit it bravely," sez I ; " an' A hae been thinkin' a guid dale aboot it iver since."

" That's richt," sez he. " A wush a' my hearers wud dae that."

" Ye see," sez I, " it wuz on a subjeck that interests me a guid dale—the different sorts o' meet that fowk eat."

A notised Peggy an' the meenister lukin' at yin anither as A said that.

" Yis, Rabin," sez he, " in these days o' invenshun, whun the wurl's runnin' mad efther new an' strange things, it's the duty o' wise an' lerned men like me tae keep the feet o' the ignerant an' unlerned frae slidin'."

" Ay, there's sum quer things cumin aboot noo," sez I, " an' a wheen o' curious notions gettin' intil the fowks' heids."

" Amang ither things," sez he, " this ootrageous doctrine o' refusin' tae eat animal food," an' A saw him lukin' at Peggy.

" Weel, sur," sez I, " A'm gled ye spauk aboot that, fur A wud like tae hae yer opeenyun ; dae ye think it's wrang tae eat beef ? "

" A beleev it's a doonricht sin tae refuse it," sez he, " whun ye can get it."

" Weel, there's cliver fowk think itherwise," sez I.

" They're a' wrang," sez he, " an' it can be proven baith frae the Bible an' frae Nature that men ir to eat fleshmeet."

" Is that a fact ? " sez I.

" Tae be sure it is," sez he.

" An' ye think A shud eat meet ? " sez I.

He lauched. " Why, man," sez he, " the wae yer mooth's made proves that ye shud."

" *My mooth !* " sez I, " is it no' the same as ither fowks. Gie me the lukin' gless, Peggy, till A see what it's like."

" Yer mooth's made on the same principle as ither fowks," sez he ; " it wuz yer teeth A wuz referrin' tae."

" Weel, what aboot them," sez I.

" If ye examine yer mooth," sez he, " ye'll see that ye hae three kinds o' teeth."

" A hae not, indeed," sez I.

" Oh, but ye hae," sez he.

" Wha tell't ye that ? " sez I.

" Naebuddy," sez he, " shair A ken it ; ither fowk haes the same."

" Ither fowk may hae what they like," sez I, " but A hae jist yin sort o' teeth. O' coorse A hae loast twa or three, but what A hae left in my heid ir my ain."

" Oh, A dinnae mean that," sez he, " it's the *shape* o' yer teeth that A'm taukin' aboot."

A begood tae be no very weel pleesed, an' sez I—

" Did ye iver examine my teeth, whun ye ken sae muckle aboot them ? "

" Na," sez he, " it's no needed ; ivery man haes three kinds o' teeth," sez he, " *sizers, dug teeth, an' mullers.*"

" Noo, yer reverence," sez I, " A wudnae like tae fa' oot wi' ye, but A'm no pleezed at ye taukin' sich blethers tae a man that micht be yer da fur age part. A tell't ye before that my teeth were a' my ain, an' A tell ye it agen, yince an' fur a', an' ony man that wud let a dug's teeth be put intil his heid he's a dirty beest, that's a' A'll say aboot him."

" Rabin, ye dinnae unnerstan' me," sez he, lauchin'.

" A dae not, indeed," sez I, " A'm railly astonished at ye."

" Man's an *aumniveris* animal," sez he, " an' he haes teeth fitted fur a' kinds o' food."

" Weel, there's a guid bit o' the animal in sum men, A'll grant ye," sez I, " but what haes that tae dae wi' their teeth ? "

" The *sizers* ir fur cuttin'," sez he, " an' the *dug teeth* ir fur teerin' flesh, an' the *mullers* ir fur grindin'."

" Ye may talk as ye like," sez I, " but A hae naethin' in my heid but my front teeth an' my dooble yins, an' A'm sorry tae

say sum o' them's very little use, ether fur cuttin', teerin', or grindin'."

He saw A wuznae pleesed; so he changed the subjeck, an' begood tae crack aboot the wether. A wuz gled whun he went awa, but A suin fun' that my trubbles wur only beginnin'!

When the meenister went oot that day, sez I tae Peggy, "bring forrit yer stool, an' sit doon at the fire here till A talk tae ye."

Puir buddy, she lukit startit like, an' sut doon awa at the tither side o' the lum.

"What brocht that man here the day?" sez I.

"Hoo dae ye think A wud ken?" sez she. "A suppoas it'll be his day in this pert."

"No' very likely, Peggy," sez I; "he's nane o' the visitin' soart, an' A'm tell't it taks him till Wednesday tae get restit efther preechin' on Sundays."

Peggy tuk haud o' the tangs, an' begood a biggin' up peats roon a pot that wuz on the fire.

"Noo, Peggy," sez I, "ye niver tell't me an ontruth in yer life, an' A'm shair yer no gaun tae dae it noo; so jist tell me, like a guid lass, wusn't it you sent fur his reverence?"

"Weel, it wuz, Rabin," sez she, "fur that crayter Sally Kirk wud gie me nae peece till A wud dae it; she says yer bewutched or sumthin', Rabin."

"Noo, Peggy," sez I, "A'm half in the noshin tae get angerry at ye; wuman, deer, ye hae nae need tae rin till yer neibors aboot the affairs o' yer ain hoose, an' if iverybuddy wud jist min' their ain bizness what a happy wurl' this wud be."

"Rabin, deer, dinnae be angerry, ye ken she keeps rinnin' in here, an' A cannae get redd o' her," sez she.

"Weel, dinnae encurage her," sez I.

"Nether A dae," sez she, "but man, deer, the hen cudnae lay an egg but she wud be in till show me the size o' it."

Sez I, "there's sum fowk haesnae as muckle brains as a hen cud haud in her shut fist, an' Sally's yin o' that soart; what bizness had she fur tae get ye tae sen' fur the meenister?"

"Ay, an' she wuz advisin' me tae send fur the doktor", sez Peggy, "fur she thinks yer min's a wee knowin' tuched wi' the wae yer rinnin' aboot, an' gaun tae meetin's."

"Bring nae doktor here if ye pleese till he's needed," sez I, "an' noo, Peggy, A maun expleen tae ye what haes put it intil

my heid tae be a vegetaryan. A hae been tell't by dacent fowk o' guid sense an' lernin' that there's no' as muckle nurishment in beef an' fowl as we imagine, an' they tell me that a man or wuman that leevs on parritch, prittas, beans, rice, milk, an' sich things, is far stronger an' healthier, an' leevs langer nor them that taks what we wud ca' heech feedin'."

" But, Rabin, yer helth's guid eneuch," sez she.

" Weel, it is, Guid be thankit," sez I, " but there's times that my heid's no' jist as cleer as A wud like it tae be, an' mebbe a change o' diet wud be usefu'."

" What'll we dae wi' a' the bacon ye cured this wunter ? " sez she.

" A suppoas A maun try an' sell it," sez I.

" A'm feered A'll no' be able tae mak ye mony comfortable denners withoot a bit o' meet o' sum sort," sez she.

" Let us begin this very day," sez I, " an' see hoo we get on ; gie me prittaes—a wheen o' them guid skerries—an' sum milk an' butter ; an' noo A maun gang an' get sumthin' din ootside."

A went oot tae the barn tae get a pickle fother fur the kye, an' jist as A wuz crossin' the close frae the barn till the byre wi' a bunnle o' stray unner yin erm an' a wheen o' turnips in my tither han', wha shud cum in through the gate but Jamey Menyarry.

" Ha, Rabin," sez he, " is that yer denner ye hae there ? " an' he begood a lauchin'.

" A dinnae ken what ye mean," sez I, " A'm jist gaun to gie the kye a pickle fother."

" Weel, the fowk wur tellin' me," sez he, " that yer gaun tae leeve on turnips an' sich like, an' A thocht mebbe ye wud try a bite o' stray betimes."

" Agh, haud yer tongue," sez I.

" A'm no' jokin," sez he, " fur jist as A cum doon the road there Davy Fulton wuz tellin' me that the Swade turnips wur up sixpence a hunner on accoont o' the report in the papers that ye had tuk till that sort o' diet."

A declare A cudnae help lauchin'.

" They maun think A hae a big stumak," sez I.

" Weel, it's no amiss fur the size o' ye," sez he ; " but it's jist sumthin' like the wae they get up the markets whun there's ony tauk o' a war gaun tae be."

" Wull ye no' gang in an' rest ye ? " sez I.

"Na—no' jist noo," sez he; "but A micht tak a danner ower atween day, agaun an' bedtime tae hae a crack wi' ye," an' awa he went.

Whun denner time cum A sut doon till my skerries an' butter; an' dae ye know, A enjoyed the plain fare rale weel. Peggy tuk the same as me, puir buddy.

Efter taytime Jamey Menyarry drappit in; an' altho' he's a fellow I dinnae care muckle aboot, he's richt guid crack, an' mony an' hooer he sits in oor hoose bletherin' an' talkin'.

"Man, Rabin," sez he, "there's a sayrious talk aboot ye in the cuntry side."

"The fowk hae little tae talk aboot," sez I.

"It's the turn ye hae taen agen eatin' beef," sez he; "an' iverybuddy's wunnerin' what ye'll dae wi' the kye an' pigs."

"A haenae thocht aboot that yit," sez I.

"A heerd Tam Bunt sayin'," sez he, "that he wud be roon tae see hoo muckle ye wur axin' fur the twa black heffers."

"The deer man!" sez I.

"Peggy, wuman," sez he, "it'll be a queer releef tae you tae get redd o' feedin' pigs," an' A seen him winkin' at Peggy.

Sez I, "it's a quer thing that a buddy cannae get eatin' what they like in a free cuntry withoot sae muckle talk."

"It'll a' end in naethin' A beleeve," sez Jamey, "fur nae man that haes got a hard day's wurk tae dae cud get throo it withoot a peece o' guid beef."

"Dae ye no' ken," sez I, "that there's aboot echty per cent. o' dirty water in beef?"

"My!" sez he, an' he glowered at me ower ocht.

"An' what aboot bacon?" sez he.

"Oh, bacon's far waur," sez I.

"Weel, there maun be a dale in imaginashin," sez he, "fur A had a big fellow frae Inglan yince fur a servint, an' naethin' angered him mair nor tae gie him parritch fur his brekfast. Mony an argyment him an' me used tae hae aboot it, an' he manteened that as a man wuz fed so he wud wurk. Weel, Sarah Ann maistly gied us parritch an' whey fur oor brekfast, an' yin mornin' A sent the man doon tae the meedow to cut a lock o' hay. A happened tae gang doon a while efter him, an' behold ye but the scythe wuz gaun back an' forrit jist aboot yin stroke in the minit, an' Jack wuz keepin' time till it wi' a kin' o' a drone o' a song—

'Stiraboot an' whey,
Hungery a' the day.'

He niver seen me, so A didnae speak till him, but birled aboot an' went hame, an' sez I, 'Sarah Ann, gie Jack his fill o' bacon an' eggs the morrow mornin'.' Weel, the nixt mornin' Jack lauched ower ocht whun he seen what wuz fur brekfast, an' A slippit doon till the meedow efter him agen, an', Rabin, A wush ye had seen him. Why, man, it wud a made the licht lee yer een tae see the wae the scythe wuz gaun, an' Jack wuz kepin' time tae it, singin' as lood as ye like—

'Bacon and eggs,
Tak care o' yer legs!' "

"A think A heerd that afore," sez I, "an' it wuz only imaginashin."

"Weel, in my opeenyun," sez he, "there's naethin' like roast beef. Man, wull ye iver furget that peece that Paddy M'Quillan had at the chris'nin' perty?"

"A think you shudnae forget it onywae," sez I.

"Man, A did enjoy it," sez he.

"Ay, ye lukit that wae," sez I; "A'm shair Paddy an' his mistress wud wunner whaur it a' went till."

Weel, we talkit this wae till bed time, an' efter Jamey went awa A begood tae think A wuz makin' a fule o' mysel'.

Nixt mornin' there wuz nether beef nor herrin's, an' Peggy niver made ony remark. Whun A had din, she says till me—

"Did ye heer aboot the meetin', Rabin?"

"What meetin', deer?" sez I.

"Doon in the skule hoose," sez she. "A'm tell't the fowk's gaun till get up a meetin' till purtest agenst this vegetaryan wurk, fur they say it's pit sum things oot o' a' buyin', if it cums till a heid, an' ither things wull bring nae price ava, an' so they say they'll stap it in time."

A niver spauk, but got up an' went oot till the barn, an' begood tae thresh a pickle corn.

At denner-time whun Peggy cried me in, A cud a tuk my 'davy that A fun' the smell o' fried beef, but A thocht it beat tae be my ain fancy. Weel, the smell got aye the stronger, an' at last A put forrit my han' an' liftit the cuver aff a big dish that wuz on the middle o' the table. My! the smell made my teeth rin water. A niver seen sich a dish o' steak in my life. Peggy niver spauk,

but A seen her smudjin' an' lauchin', as she tuk a fork an' put aboot a pun' wecht o' it on my plate. Weel, what cud A dae? A felt as if A hadnae tasted meat fur a month, an' there cum a langing' an' a hungerin' ower me that A had niver felt afore. Twa or three times A lifted my knife an' fork, but aye felt shame an' laid them doon agen.

At last Peggy finished me. She niver said a wurd, but jist tuk up my knife an' fork, and A lukit on like yin in a dream. She stuck the fork intil the meat, cut aff a nice wee peece, dippit it in the saut, an' hel' it up till my mooth, an' sez she—

"Hae!"

A dinnae ken hoo it wuz, whuther the smell owercum me, or whuther it wuz the force o' hebit, but A apened my mooth an' shut it agen. Peggy had pappit in the beef, an' whun A shut my mooth A wuz cleen bate, an' A jist lauched in her face. If iver a man enjoyed a beefsteak A enjoyed that yin, and whun A had cleened my plate, an' returned thanks, Peggy lukit intil my face, an' sez she—

"Weel?"

"Peggy, dear," sez I, "they may stap the meetin', fur A cannae be a vegetaryan."

THE MEER'S PROCLAMATION.

MY dochter Susanna's man warks on the Queen's Islan'. He's a rivetter there an' he gie an' affen sen's me yin o' the Bilfast newspapers. A had been readin' a wheen yeer ago aboot the proclamashun the Meer o' Bilfast put oot sayin' that naebuddy wud be alloed tae merch thro' the toon wi' music or flags. A declare, altho' the hervest had jist cum in, A cudnae min' my wark A wuz sae angerry.

Sez Peggy tae me yin day, sez she—

"What ir ye shakin' yer auld heid an' mutterin' tae yersel' aboot? A doot ye hae been daein' sumthin'."

"Sorra thing A hae been daein', Peggy, but A cannae keep that proclamashun oot o' my heid, an' it maun be put a stap tae. Jamey Menyarry's gaun up tae Bilfast the morrow mornin' wi'

milk an' butter, an' A'll gang up wi' him, an' if A can see that Meer A'll speak my min' gie an' freely tae him."

"See what meer?" sez Peggy. "Stae at hame, an' luk efter yer ain meer, my man. Did ye gie her a feed o' corn th' day yit?"

"Haud yer tongue, wi' yer havers, Peggy!" sez I. "It's a *man* A'm talkin' aboot, the Meer o' Bilfast, an' no a horse; he's the man that's aboon a' the megistrates, an' sogers an' polis, an' ivery ither buddy in Bilfast, an' it's him that made that proclaymashun aboot the purcessions."

"He's a nice boy that," sez Peggy; "dae they think he's fit tae be a meer?"

"A dinnae ken, Peggy, but A'll gie him my openyin onywae."

"Ye may keep yer win' tae cool yer kail," sez she; "muckle he'll care fur what ye think. Stae at home, an' get the corn cut, an' dinnae be makin' an ass o' yersel'."

"Peggy, A'll gang if ye shud stan' on yer heid," sez I; "it's my duty tae dae sumthin' fur the guid o' my fella-men, an' noo's the time, so A'll awa an' see Jamey Menyarry. We'll be startin' aboot fower o'clock in the mornin'."

Aff Jamey an' me startit the nixt mornin' shair eneuch, an' reached Bilfast in brave guid time. Whun A had got redd o' Jamey, A went up tae the Crown, tae get a cup o' coffay. She wuz a terble nice, pleesant-lukin' lass that attended tae me, an' sez I tae her—

"Dochter, cud ye tell me whaur the Meer o' Bilfast leeves?"

"Na, sur," sez she, "A cud not, but ony o' the polis wud tell ye."

"Thank ye," sez I, an' awa A went. A stepp't up tae the furst polisman A seen, an' sez I—

"Sur, whaur diz the Meer leev?"

"What Meer?" sez he.

"The Bilfast Meer," sez I.

"What are ye bletherin' aboot?" sez he, "A think yer drunk."

"Indeed, A'm naethin' o' the soart," sez I. "A mean the man that's ower ye a'; the man that put up the proclaymashun aboot havin' nae purcessions."

"Dae ye want tae see him?" sez he.

"A dae," sez I.

"Weel," sez he, "yer in richt guid time, fur he's been awa on his holidays, an' he's jist hame this mornin'," an' then he directed me hoo tae gang till his hoose.

A fun' it oot efter sum bother, an' A gie nice hoose it is. Whun A wuz ringin' the bell A begood tae feel a wee bit nervish like. The daur wuz apened by a nice-lukin' man wi' a white necktie on him.

Sez I, "Sur, is the Meer in?"

"Weel, what dae ye want?" sez he, an' he lukit as if he wud like tae shut the daur in my face.

Sez I, "Yer the crossest clergyman iver A seen in my life."

He lauched at that.

"A'm no' a clergyman," sez he.

"Weel, A beg yer pardon, sur," sez I, "but whun A seen yer white tie A thocht ye wur a meinister. Tell yer mester that an auld gentleman wushes maist pertikerlarly tae see him regardin' the proclamayshun."

"Dae ye want tae swear a reeformayshin?" sez he.

"Na, A dae not want tae swear," sez I, "but there maun be a reeformayshin verra suin."

"Cum in," sez he.

"A'm muckle obleedged tae ye," sez I, "an' there's sumthin' tae yersel', an' A slippit him a saxpence. By that time he had put me into a big gran' room fu' o' beautiful furniture, but whun he lukit at the saxpence he birled oot an' slammed the daur till efter him."

"Yer a prood crayter," sez I tae mysel'.

A lukit roon me fur a plain wuden cher or stool tae sit doon on, but there wuz naethin' o' the kin', an' the sates wur a' that nicely carved an 'stuffed that A didnae like tae tuch them. "Oh, ay," sez I, "this Meer's no' a wurkin' man, that's cleer, an' so A suppoas he hasnae muckle sympathy wi' them. What a peety it is that men in heech stayshin o' life forget the puirer men expect a wee bit hermless enjoyment noo an' then as weel as themsels."

Jist wi' that the daur apened, an' a nice quate lukin' gentleman cum in.

"Guid mornin', sur," sez I, "A hope yer verra weel."

"Purty weel, thank ye," sez he, "what wae ir ye yersel'?"

"Ded, A daurnae compleen," sez I.

"May A inquire yer name?" sez he.

"Wheesht!" sez I, pittin' my finger tae my mooth an' lukin' a' roon as if A wuz feer'd sumbuddy wud heer. Then A tried the daur if it wuz shut, an' turnin' roon A says tae the Meer, sez I—

"A'm cum frae an' auld an' noble femily, but A'm trevlin' private jist noo, an' wud rether no menshin my name till A'm gaun awa."

"Sit doon," sez he, smilin' quite freenly, "yer no' the furst yin o' noble bluid A hae entertained," an' he sut down on a cher aside me.

"An' noo," sez he, "what am A tae attribit the honour o' this visit tae?"

"Niver min' the *honour*," sez I, "it's no' wurth menshunin'. A thocht yer wur mebbe a young man that A cud talk tae like a feyther, but A see yer aboot my ain age, an' A'll tak the liberty o' crackin' wi' ye like a brither."

"Dinnae menshin the *liberty*," sez he.

"Weel, noo," sez I, "let's cum tae biziness at yince; ir ye gaun tae let the Islan'men walk on Seturday?"

He jumpit as if A had struck him.

"Ir ye frae Dublin Castle?" sez he.

"Na," sez I, "but ye mauna ask questyins. What aboot the Islan'men?"

"A'll no' let them walk in purcession," sez he.

"Deed an' they'll walk," sez I, "an' what can ye dae tae prevent them?"

"Bring in a thoosan' extra polis, an' get oot a' oor ain force, an' a' the sogers wi' loaded guns an' fixed baynets," sez he.

"Hoots, haud yer tongue!" sez I; "them boys cares as much fur yer guns as A wud aboot wee Paddy's pea-pluffer, an' as fur yer baynets they wud brek them like knittin-'needles."

"Weel," sez he, "A'll hae a' the big cannons that ye saw at the Custom Hoose loaded wi' graips ——."

"Balderdash!" sez I, "A wuz lukin' at them; they're a' pluggit up wi' lumps o' timmer, an' there's no' yin o' them wide eneuch in the mooth tae let a graip in. Ye micht get a pitchfork intae yin o' them."

He lauched at that.

"Min' ye," sez I, "it's no' a wheen waens at a skule trip ye hae tae dale wi', but twa or three thoosan' full-grown men, an' ye micht as weel think tae kep the tide wi' a pitchfork as tae stap them frae walkin'."

"Oh, they wud niver face the sogers," sez he.

"Man," sez I, "they wud jist gang through them the wae a circus lass wud jump through a paper hoop."

" A don't think they'll attempt tae walk," sez he.

" Indeed they'll walk," sez I, " an' John Rea wull be at the heid o' them."

" Yer makin' fun," sez he, " dae ye think John Rea wull be there ? "

" A'm shair o't," sez I, " an' ye ken he's no' tae be trifled wi'."

Whun A tell't the Meer John Rea wud be at the purcession, he wrung his han's in despair.

" Weel," said he, " A dinnae min' tellin' *you* in a saycret, that A'm in a hole about that proclaymashun."

" That's jist what ye ir," sez I, " an' if ye dinnae watch yersel' ye'll get intae mair trouble. The hale toon's flamin' at ye. Why, man, deer, luk at them puir wee waens in the wurkhoose. The guardians wantid tae gie them a sail tae Bangor, an' they're afeard tae tak them doon tae the steam-boat."

" An' wull they no' get their sail ? " sez he.

" Indeed they wull," sez I, " but jist luk at the wae they're gaun tae be ta'en to the quay."

" What wae ? " sez he.

" Why," sez I, " A saw in the paper that a man haes offered fur twunty pounds tae tak them doon tae the boat, fower at a time, in barrels an' baskets."

" Oh," sez he, " that's rich ! " an' he lauched ower ocht.

" Na, man," sez I, " but that's what it is to be puir. Men like you an' me, Mister Meer, that disnae ken hoo muckle we're wurth, that can ride in oor carriages, an' lie in oor easy chers, seldom think o' the puir unless hoo we can crush them wi' oor heels. We shudnae forget that they're flesh an' bluid like oorsels."

" Ye tuch my feelin's," sez he, wipin' his een wi' his hankerchey.

" Weel, noo," sez I, " A want tae dae ye a guid turn if ye'll jist follow my advice."

" Gang on," sez he, " A'm lissenin' tae ye."

" My son-in-law tells me," sez I, " that there's gaun to be a meetin' o' the megistrates ; noo," sez I, " step you in like a man an' tell them tae sen' roon the polis tae teer doon a' the proclaymashuns, fur that it's at an end, an' that the Islan'men may walk as muckle as they like."

" A cud niver dae that," sez he, " it would mak a cleen ass o' me."

" Not a bit of it," sez I, " ye wud aye be the Meer, an' mebbe afore yer time's up the fowk wull hae forgot a' aboot it."

" A cudnae think o' it," sez he.

" An' why didn't ye stae awa till efter Seturday ? "

" So A wud," sez he ; " but the fowk wur talkin' sae muckle aboot it that A thocht it better tae cum hame, but it's oot o' the fryin' pan intae the fire."

" Weel," sez I, " ye hae yer choice. If ye oppose them men on Seturday, Guid only knows what'll happen ; but yin thing's shair—ye'll niver know peace as lang as ye leev."

" Iverybuddy'll lauch at me," sez he.

" Weel, they wull, true eneuch," sez I ; " but it's aye better tae lauch than tae greet. Jist think o' yer ain femily, man, that's tae leev efter ye."

" Then ye want me tae eat the leek," sez he.

" Weel, ye maun eat a wee bit leek," sez I ; " but swallow it as quick as ye can, an' ye'll har'ly fin' the taste o' it."

" A'll think it ower," sez he, " an' ye'll dine wi' me this evenin'."

" Na," sez I, " thank ye, A haenae time ; but there's nae need fur ye thinkin' ower it. Decide at yince."

He walkit up an' doon the room.

" Hoo dae ye like tae be Meer ? " sez I.

" Oh, it's a fine thing tae be Meer o' Bilfast," sez he, " an' hae unlimited pooer in yer han's."

" A'm shair it is," sez I ; " but ye shud use yer power for the guid o' the fowk ye rule. Noo, why don't ye shut up a' the public-hooses on the Lord's Day ? "

" A daurnae dae that," sez he, " altho' naethin' wud pleeze me better. A wud be meddlin' wi' the liberties o' the people, fur the Parlymint alloos them tae keep the hooses apen on Sunday."

" Ay," sez I, " an' the Parlymint alloos Sunday skule waens, an' the Islan'men, an' a' the ither loyal subjects, tae walk in purcession, an' yit ye hae tell't them that ye'll no' alloo them. Dae ye no' ca' *that* interferin' wi' the liberties o' the people ? "

" Mebbe it is," sez he.

" There's nae mebbes aboot it," sez I.

Weel, A saw that the Meer wuz givin' in, an' A talkit gran' aboot the liberty o' the subject.

Sez the Meer at last, sez he, " A'll gie in tae ye ; an' insteed o' sendin' oot the polis tae oppose the Islan'men, A'll sen' them tae purtect them."

" Deed, ye neednae bother yer heid," sez I, " the Islan'men

can tak care o' themsels, an' if onybuddy meddles wi' them, let them take what they'll get. An' noo, A'll bid ye guid mornin'," sez I.

"But ye'll tell me yer name," sez he.

"A wull dae that," sez I, "A'm Rabin Gordon, o' Ballycuddy, a plain, honest fermer; my wife's Peggy Gordon, an' my dochter's merried tae an Islan'man, an' their auldest wee boy, wee Paddy, leevs wi' us."

"But yer anshent femily?" sez he.

"A'm descended frae Adam," sez I, "an' A suppoas so ir you."

"Humbug!" sez he.

"Nae humbug aboot it," sez I; "ye happen tae leev in a bigger hoose than A dae, but ye mebbe wurnae ay sae heech up in the wurl, an' shudnae be ower prood. Sumtimes A think Providence pits a sma' value on riches whun A see the sort o' fowk they're gien tae."

Wi' that he rung the bell, an' the man wi' the white tie cum in.

"James," sez the Meer, "shew this man oot."

"Guid mornin'," sez I, "an' min' if ye dinnae keep yer wurd A'll tell John Rea a' aboot it."

My, but A went hame prood that nicht, an' my heart wuz as licht as a fether.

"Peggy," sez I, "the proclaymashun's deid; A hae seen the Meer, an' got him tae stap it, an' A'm gaun wi' the Islan'men tae Ballymena."

"Weel, Rabin, A'll no' hinner ye," sez she, "an' A wush ye a pleesint day."

A neednae tell ye that we had a pleesint day indeed. Wasn't it a gran' sicht tae see near three thoosan' o' them men merchin' tae the train, an' a' the streets crowded wi' hunners o' thoosan's lukin' at them. A helpit tae carry John Rea on my shooders up Donegall Street, an' mind ye, he wuz nae wee wecht. It wuz a day that A'll niver forgit.

There haes been mony an' mony a change since then. Puir John Rea is in his lang restin' place, an' so is a guid wheen o' the fowk that A met that day in the purcession. There haes been a wheen mair Meers o' Bilfast since the time that A stappit the Islan'men's proclaymashun, an' twa or three o' them invited me

tae their hooses fur a bit crack. Whun A did gang up tae see them A wuznae yin bit afeared tae gie them a bit o' advice, an' it wuz a' ta'en in rale guid pert.

A'll tell ye a' these cracks by an' by.

THE FECHTIN' DUGS.

SHORTLY efter the day o' the Islan'men's trip A wuz up in Bilfast wi' a load of prittaes, an' efter A had got them selt A went as far as the Elbert Memoryal. A saw a wheen fowk gethered there, an' heerd a terble growlin' an' worryin', like dugs, an' so A run forrit tae see what wuz wrang. Weel, it wuz twa dugs that wuz fechtin', an' the noise o' them wuz perfectly horrible, an' ye wud a thocht they wud a cleen et yin anither up. Yin o' them wuz a big bull-dog, an' an ugly brute; he had got the tither doon on his back, an' A wudnae a likit tae hae been in its place.

Jist as A got weel forrit, A heerd a man shoutin'—

"Seyperate the dugs, sur, whun A bid ye!"

A thocht A shairly kenned the voice, so A birled roon tae get a luk at the man, an' wha wuz it but the Meer. He wuz stannin' close ahint me, an' he knowed me in a minit.

"What wae ir ye the day, Mister Gordon?" sez he; "isn't it a shame tae see that?"

"It is, indeed," sez I, "can it no' be stappit?"

Wi' that the Meer turned roon tae the man he had spauk tae afore, an' sez he—

"Dae ye refuse tae seyperate the dugs?"

"A'll no' bother my heid wi' them," sez the man.

"Dae ye ken wha yer taukin' tae?" sez the Meer.

"Na, nor what's mair, A dinnae care," sez the man.

"Weel, A'm the Meer," sez he.

"A dinnae care an auld choo o' tabaka wha' ye ir," sez the fellow, "so awa hame an' min' yer bizness."

"A'll gie ye in cherge," sez the Meer, "fur daurin' tae disobey my orders."

Then he turned roon tae me, an' sez he, "Rabin, will *you* dae it fur me?"

"Dae what, sur?" sez I.

"Stap the dugs frae fechtin'," sez he.

"Weel, sur," sez I, "ye ken A wud dae ocht fur ye that's in rayson, efter what ye did fur me aboot the proclaymashin —."

"Whisht!" sez he, "haud yer tongue aboot that, an' let us get them dugs seyperated. Grup the bull-dog in yer erms," sez he, "an' haud him till A get a polisman."

"A doot the dug wud bite me, sur," sez I.

"Well A'll help ye," sez the Meer; "if you catch him by the heid, A'll haud his tail."

Sez I, "A wud rather you wud tak the tither en' o' him, fur A dinnae like the luk o' his teeth."

A steppit up close tae the dugs, an' A stampit my fit, an' sez I, "Choo! choo, sur!"

He niver let on he heerd me.

Sez I, "Sur, you micht speek tae him fur you bein' the Meer, he'll pye mair respect tae you than he wud tae me."

"A think mebbe he wud," sez he, an' wi' that he steppit forrit, an' stampit his fit the wae he had seen me daein', an' sez he—

"Choo, sur! choo, sur! choo!!"

Behold ye, the dug niver as much as turned roon. Sez I, "The unmennerly brute, tae disregard the Meer! Tak yer fit, sur," sez I, "an' gie him a guid kick."

A think he wuz afeard tae dae that, but he tuk his umbrella an' gied him a dig in the ribs. The dug lukit roon, an' gied sich a growl that the Meer jumpit back.

"Man," sez I, "A wush A had Peggy's beetle here. A wud knock the brute's brains oot at yin skite."

Weel, A notised the fowk lukin' at me talkin' tae the Meer, an' thinks I, "Noo, they'll be takin' me fur a megistrate or an inspector o' polis"; so A steppit forrit, an' sez I—

"Cum, boys, tak hoult o' them dugs."

Behold ye, but afore ye cud say "Jack Robyson" they had them seyperated.

"Ah, Rabin," sez the Meer, "ye see what it is tae hev a commandin' presence."

"Oh, yer jokin', sur," sez I; "but tae tell the truth," sez I, "at a time like this it disnae answer a man tae be the leest bit saft-lukin'."

Wi' that the fellow that the Meer had spauk tae wuz slippin' aff, an' sez the Meer tae me, sez he—

" Rabin, awa fur a polisman. A dinnae ken whaur they hae been a' this time, but they can niver be whaur they're wanted."

A thocht A wud put in a wurd fur them, an' sez I—

" Mebbe, they're awa at their denner."

" Weel, awa an' luk fur yin," sez he; " an' A'll follow efter this fellow an' keep me e'e on him till ye catch up tae me."

Guid luck wuz on my side, an' A hadnae went far till A met a bobby.

Sez I, " Sur, cum fast, fur the Meer's cleen mad."

" What's wrang wi' her," sez he, " dae ye think A'm a horse doktor! "

" Oh, it's no my ain Meer," sez I, " it's *your* Meer."

" Ye shud a watered the last half yin," sez he; " fur A niver had as much as a donkey in my life."

" Yer a donkey yersel! " sez I; " did ye no——."

He gruppit me by the collar, an' sez he—

" Cum awa tae the offis! "

" Tak yer han' aff me in yin minit! " sez I.

A drew mysel' up wi' sich an air that he drappit me like a hot pritta. A tried tae explain it a' tae him, an' A heerd him mutterin' tae himsel.

" Bother the Meer! "

Weel, we sune got up tae the Meer, an' the fellow wuz jist in front o' him, an' sez the Meer tae the polisman, sez he—

" Polisman! tak that man to the offis."

" What's the cherge, sur," sez the polisman, touchin' his hat.

" Oh, A'll cherge him mysel,'" sez the Meer, an' wi' that the polisman collared the fellow, an' led him aff.

Sez the Meer tae me, sez he—

" Rabin, ye see the law maun be mainteened; the toon's a reglar lanchin' stock, but while A'm the Meer A'm determined tae teech the fowk menners."

" That's richt, sur," sez I.

" An' noo, Rabin," sez he, " noo that A hae time tae speek tae ye, what made ye pit that peece in the paper aboot the proclay-mashin? "

" Indeed, sur," sez I, " A cudnae help it; A went tae see a frien' o' mine, an' he maun hae rote it doon sum wae orither, as A tell't it."

" Weel, A'm very angerry aboot it," sez he, " hooaniver, A'll forgie ye, if ye'll cum tae the coort the morrow, an' gie evidence aboot the dugs."

" Wi' a' my heart," sez I, " but what'll Peggy say if A dinnae gang hame the nicht ? An' then A hae nae place here to stap in."

" Ye can pit up at the Impayrael," sez he.

A wunnered in my ain min' whaur that wuz, but sez I—

" Tae be shair, sur, an' A suppoas A'll get ludgin' for the auld meer an' kert there tae."

He lauched at that, an' slippit a soverin intae my han', an' sez he—

" That'll cuver yer expenses," sez he. " Menshun my name tae Mister Jury, an' he'll gie ye the best pert o' his hotel tae stap in." He shuk han's wi' me then, an' bid me guid day.

" Guid day, sur," sez I, " A hope the mistress an' femily's weel."

" Thank ye," sez he, " they're a' purty weel," an' awa' he went.

A steppit up tae a dacent lukin' carman, an' sez I—

" Whaur aboots is the Impayreal ? "

" Impayreal what ? " sez he.

" O, the Impayreal," sez I, " the Meer o' Bilfast wuz advisin' me tae pit up there."

The fellow grinned frae ear to ear.

" Ay," sez he, " that's jist the place for ye, A'll drive ye up fur a shillin'."

" Thank ye," sez I, " but A hae a kert wi' me an' can get a ride fur naething, if ye'll kindly shew me the strecht road."

" Jist gang up High Street," sez he, " as far as iver ye can get, then turn tae the left, an' onybuddy wull shew ye it."

Thinks I, " Noo afore A tak up the kert A'll hae a luk at the place," an' so A dannered up the street an' suin fun' it oot.

" Na, na, Rabin, my man," sez I, " it's ower gran' fur ye that. But what'll A dae if the Meer shud hear that A disobeyed him." A happy thocht struck me ; A'll gang sum ither place fur my denner, an' A'll cum back here an' walk up an' doon afore the daur, pickin' my teeth. If the Meer passes he'll think A got my denner at the Impayreal.

Nixt day A wuz at the coort in guid time. A had aften read in the papers aboot it, an' hoo the returneys fell oot an' ca'd each ither names, but A had nae noshin it wuz as bad as it is. A deklare it's shamefu' the wae they get on.

Whun the case aboot the dugs cum on, the polisman that tuk the man tae the offis got up intae a place like a pulpit an' kissed the Book. He hadnae very muckle tae say.

A wud not like Mister Mackerlane till hae a case agen me. He's a sayries man thon. A niver heerd sich a tongue as he haes in a' my life.

He jumpit tae his feet an' sez he till the peeler, sez he—

"What made ye arrest this man?"

"Bekase the Meer tell't me," sez he.

"What wuz he daein?"

"Walkin' down the strate."

"Did he resist?"

"Oh, no; bedad he wint wid me like a lamb."

"Ye may go down, sir," sez Mister Mackerlane.

Then they put up the Meer. Puir John Rea that's noo deid an' awa wuz till the fore at the time A'm talkin' aboot. He wuz in the coort, an' A wush ye had seen him whun the Meer wuz in the box. He wuz like a hen on a hot griddle, an' he got that excited lukin' A thocht he wuz gaun tae jump at the Meer, an' he kept tearin' his fingers up through his hair, an' risin' up an' sittin' doon as if the sate wuz burnin' him.

The Meer tell't his story very quate an' nice, an' the minnit he had din John Rea jumpit up, an' sez he—

"Dae ye ken what a *Ninnimy* is?"

"A'll no answer ye," sez the Meer.

"Dae ye ken what a *Funnygraff* is?" sez John.

"A'll no answer ony onrevillant questions," sez the Meer.

"A'll mak ye answer," sez John, "an' A'm gledder than a fifty poun' note in my pokit tae see ye in that box."

The Meer lukit at the megistrates, an' sez he—

"Wull yer honour purtect me frae this man?"

A pokit the Meer's coat tail. He lukit roon, an' sez he—

"Oh, Rabin, A'm glad tae see ye, cum an' tak my place."

Sez I, "Sur, wull A get a wheen o' the polis tae stan' roon ye?"

A think he didnae hear me, fur he turned tae the megistrate agen, an' it micht hae been a lesson tae ignerant fowk the nice respectfu' wae he spauk. "Yer honour," sez he, "A'll hae tae gang hame, fur A'm no terble weel this mornin', but there's an auld gentleman here, a Mister Rabin Gordon, that can tell ye

iverything. Treat him wi' ivery respect," sez he, an' wi' that he slippit awa oot o' the coort.

A polisman helpit me up intae the box, an' a returney man got up, an' sez he tae me, sez he—

"What dae you know aboot this case?"

"Weel," sez I, "as A wuz gaun doon the street fur a bowl o' broth——."

"Noo, dinna bother us wi' broth," sez he.

"Ye'll mebbe be gled o' a guid bowl o' them sum cauld day," sez I.

"Tell us what ye seen," sez he.

"A saw a big bull-dug worryin' anither dug," sez I, "jest as A wuz gaun fur a bowl o' broth," sez I.

"Confound yer broth," sez he, "hoo big wuz the dug?"

"Oh," sez I, "it wuz a brave big yin."

"What size wuz it?" sez he.

"It wuz a guid lump o' a dug," sez I.

"Wull ye tell me hoo big it wuz?" sez he, gettin' cleen mad.

"Deed," sez I, "it wuz as big as ony dug o' the same size iver A seen."

"Whaur dae ye leev?" sez he.

"Doon in Bellycuddy," sez I.

"A think there's a guid wheen cuddies there," sez he.

"No as mony as A see here," sez I.

"Dae ye mean tae say that A'm an ass?" sez he.

"Weel," sez I, "A hae as guid a richt tae ca' you an ass as you hae tae say A'm a cuddy; hooaniver, if the shoe disnae fit ye, why ye neednae pit it on."

"Very good, my man," sez John Rea.

"Go on wi' yer story," sez the megistrate.

"Weel," sez I, "the Meer axed that man there tae sayperate the dugs, an' whun he refused, then he said tae me that if A wud catch him by the heid he wud tak him by the tail."

"Noncense, man!" sez the returney, "wha iver saw a man haudin' on by a dug's tail; yer thinkin' aboot cuddies noo."

"Deed A em not," sez I, "there's John Rea whun he's bathin' at the Pickey Rocks taks his big dug by the tail an' lets it poo him through the water."

"Its a fact," sez John Rea, "an' A'll not alloo this dacent man tae be bulleyed."

"Hae ye trevelled much?" sez the returney man.

"A hae went ower a guid bit o' grun in my day," sez I, "an' mebbe A hae seen as muckle as you hae."

"Did ye iver see the *Cleekypatra Needle?*" sez he.

"Mony a time," sez I, "oor Peggy keeps yin o' them tae dern my socks wi'."

The fowk gied a yell o' a lauch at that, an' sez John Rea, jumpin' tae his feet, sez he—

"A tell ye A'll no alloo this man tae be bulleyed."

"Sit doon, sir," sez anither man, "yer deleyin' the coort."

"*Your* nae returney," sez John.

"A em," sez the tither, "but you're a low unmennerly fellow, an' yer a ragin' bully, yer a——."

A cudnae tell a' that wuz said. Five or six o' them wuz argeyin' an' yellin' through ither. The megistrate cudnae mak himsel' heerd, so he left the bench cleen disgusted. Then A saw the polismen winkin' an' lauchin' at yin anither, an' the fellows in the coort wur yellin' an' cheerin', an' as A saw naebuddy mindin' me, A slippit awa oot, an' startit fur hame.

That dug case cummed on agen a guid wheen times, an' the Meer sent me letters axin' me tae gang up an' gie evidence, but Peggy wudnae heer tell o' it. She said A had din plenty, an' that if A did won the case A wud get terble little thanks fur it, an' mebbe a guid dale o' abuse.

A tuk her advice, an' A beleev she wuz richt. Ivery time the Meer met me efterwards he lukit a weethin' dry wi' me; hooaniver A didnae care, fur Am just as guid as he is. But frae that day till this Mister Mackerlane an' me haes been great freens. Mony a time, whun A'm up in Bilfast, A call at his offis, an' mony a wee bit letter he haes writ fur me. A maun tell ye sum day aboot the bathin' match him an' me had at Pickey Rock yin day.

NEWTON FLOWER SHOW.

[AS READ BY ROBIN AT A SPECIAL ENTERTAINMENT IN ASSEMBLY ROOMS, NEWTOWNARDS.]

A NEEDNAE tell ye that Newtonerds is the grandest pert in creation for flooer shows. They hae been tryin' till ootdae it in a wheen ither places, bit they jist made lauchinstocks o' themsels.

There wuznae sae muckle talk throo' the country this year aboot the Flooer Show as there wuz sum years back, fur raelly the fowk ir oot o' heart wi' the bad wather an' the failyer o' the pritta crap. Hooaniver, there wuz a terble sough got up aboot the horse jumpin' an' aboot prizes for butter. Weel, Jamey Menyarry wuz in oor house yin nicht, an' he's yin o' these quer snifflin', sneerin' soart o' fowk that ye cud niver ken whuther they're in fun or ernest, an' mony a time A cud jist fin in my heart till draw my han' an' gie him a whussel across the ear. Ye ken the kin' o' fowk A mean. Weel, as A wuz sayin', Jamey cum in yin nicht, an' durin' the discoorse he sez till Peggy, sez he, "What wud ye think of compytatin' fur a prize fur the butter, Peggy?"

Peggy jist lauched.

"Weel, an' what's till hinner her?" sez I.

"A'm shair A dinnae ken," sez Jamey, "bit A think," sez he, "she wud only hae the bother o' carryin' it hame agen."

Sez I, "Jamey, A'll back her agen iver anither wuman frae Bellycuddy till Killygullib fur dressin' butter. She's no scaured till tak' the hairs oot o' it," sez I, "fur feer o' loasin' sumthin' in the wecht."

That shut Jamey up. Dinnae be sayin' that A tell't ye, but it's as true as yer there, that he wudnae let the wife either strain the milk or draw a knife through the butter fur feer o' makin' it ocht the lichter.

When Jamey went awa A sez till Peggy—

"Noo, Peggy, my wuman, luk here; yer tae wun a prize fur yer butter, an' if ye dae A'll gar Mister Simms turn ye oot the best silk dress in his hale shop."

She made me nae anser, but jist gied her unner lip a wee nip wi' her teeth, an' sez I till mysel'—

" Rabin, ye may order the silk dress jest as suin as ye like."

Weel, A went intil Newton the nixt day wi' a wheen prittas, an' A tuk wee Paddy's shoon wi' me, fur yin o' them was athraw in the heel. A went intil Mister M'Kee's till get them sortit, an' sez he till me, sez he—

" A suppoas ye'll be fur the Flooer Show, Rabin ? "

" Ye may be shair o' that," sez I, " an' what dae ye think A hae till tell ye," sez I, " but Peggy's fur gaun till compytate fur a prize fur butter."

" Sit up till the fire," sez he.

" It's as true as yer there," sez I.

" Weel, A'm shair A wush her luck," sez he, " an' A'll warrant you'll no' be far ahint her. What ir you fur showin' ? " sez he.

" A hae naethin' ava the yeer wurth shewin'," sez I.

" What wud ye think," sez he, " if ye wur till enter the auld meer fur the horse jumpin' ? "

" Agh, ga lang oot o' that ! " sez I ; " yer takin' a rise oot o' me."

" A em not, indeed," sez he ; " its' commonly reported," sez he, " that yer frien' Rabin Byers is gaun till enter Jinney, his auld white meer, fur the furst prize."

" Oh, be the powers o' war," sez I, " bit if that's the case A'll pit the winkers on the auld meer the morn's mornin', an' A'll mak' her cleer ivery dyke in Bellycuddy."

My, he lauched ower ocht.

Weel, as true as A'm here, bit A cud not gang till my bed that nicht fur thinkin' aboot it, an' A sut in my erm cher at the fireside till neer twa in the mornin'. A fell asleep whaur A wuz sittin', ether three or fower times, an' as shair as A did that, A dreemed that A wuz on the auld meer's back, wi' a cupple o' big corker pins stuck in the heels o' my boots fur spurs, and ivery time that A gied her a wee jag wi' them A thocht she was that fu' o' spirit that she riz on her hin' legs, an' then A wud wauken up wi' the souse she cum doon on the grun'. A micht a fell intil the fire an' been burned !

At last A went tae bed, an' A got up the nixt mornin' jist as daylicht wuz brekin', an' awa A went till the stable an' got oot the auld meer. She cud not unnerstan' what A wanted wi' her sae early, an' whun she fun me pittin' the seddle on her she flappit her tail roon her ower ocht. A'm no' neer as soople as A used to

be, and A had sayrious bother gettin' on her back. A tuk her doon intil the lint fiel', an' trotted her up to the whun dyke, an' as we cum forrit A gied her a dunt wi' my heels, thinkin' she wud gang ower it. My! she made at it like a three-year-auld till she cum up till it, whun she jist stappit like a shot, an' very neer sent me ower her heid.

"Hoots, woman!" sez I, "why didn't ye cleer the dyke?"

She niver let on she heerd me, bit jist begood a bitin' the taps o' the whun bushes. A got aff her back, an' lukit ower the dyke till see what it wuz like on the tither side, then A got on agen, turned her aboot an' trotted her till the tither en' o' the fiel', an' then A set her heid for the dyke agen, an' sez I till mysel', "A maun keep a better grup this time fur feer she throws me."

"Noo, Judey, my woman, dae ye heer me?" sez I.

She cocket her lugs ower ocht.

"Yer till jump yon dyke," sez I, "an' niver as muckle as touch the whuns wi' yer heels. Gee up, Judey!"

She made aff like yin o'clock, bit the minit she cum forrit till the dyke she jist stappit the same wae. A tried till throw my erms roon her neck till hould on, bit the furst place A fun mysel' wuz lyin' on the braid o' my back in the shough. A lay a guid wee bit afore A cud gether mysel' up, an' puir Judey put her heid ower an' nichered at me. Puir thing! A had taen the rines an' winkers wi' me, an' left her stannin' bare heided.

A thocht that wuz plenty o' the horse jumpin' fur me, an' so A put the meer in the stable, an' gied up the noshin' o' it.

Weel, whun the day o' the Flooer Show cum there wuz ower a' the rejoicin' aboot it bein' fine wather. A wonner hoo it happened onyway.

A wush ye had a seen the fowk that turned oot alang the Bellycuddy road that mornin'—an' the grandyer o' baith men an' weemen. If ye had heerd the jirgin' o' their boots ye wud a thocht the country wuz fu' o' corncrakes! They wur cumin' frae Bellycuddy, an' Bellyfooter, an' Killygullib, an' Bellyclabber, an' Cloghole, an' Bellygulder, an' sum wuz trevlin' an' sum wuz ridin' in kerts, an' cars, an' gigs. Och, ye niver seen ocht like it. An' the weemen wi' their baskets o' butter, an' the men wi' their bundles o' wheat, an' corn, an' lint, an' turnips, an' iverythin' ye cud name. A wush ye had seen Jamey Menyarry joggin' alang wi' twa grate big Aberdeen

turnips unner yin erm, an' a cupple o' big lang rid mangel weezel unner the tither.

A tuk the meer an' kert, fur A had Peggy an' wee Paddy wi' me, an' A didnae want them till be crushed in the train, an' there wuz that mony fowk till bid us the time o' day that A niver thocht a bit lang on the road. Peggy the crater had as mony questyins till ax me whun we cum till Newton, as if she niver had seen the place afore. Whun we cum till the Square A had tae stap the meer till Peggy wud luk at it.

"My!" sez she, "an' that's whaur my Rabin merched up an' doon wi' his gun an' bayonet, an' went throo' his expensive noshins."

"Yis, deer," sez I; "ivery time that A see the Square A feel my bluid gettin' up, an' A jist think A see the squads on parade, the Major ridin' aboot on his horse, an' the sergints cryin' oot as hard as they're able—

"SHAN! EYES—FRUNT—!! QUICK MERCH!!!"

Afore A knowed what A wuz aboot A fun' mysel' stannin' up in the kert wavin' my erms roon my heid; then A gruppit the rines an' gied the meer a slap wi' them till she made a plunge forrit, and very neer run ower an auld wuman aback o' the Market Hoose.

Weel, then A showed Peggy the twa banks—Mister Parr's an' Mister Mackintoshe's—whaur A keep a wheen o' wee Posset Resates, an' whun we got doon the street as far as the Ulster Hotel, A stappit the kert, an' sez I till Peggy, "A niver pass that hoose but A think o' them that's awa tae their lang hame, an' fancy A see a wee laddie in pettycoats playin' aboot the daur. That's the hoose 'Rabin' wuz born in, Peggy."

Then A shewed her the hoose wi' the "terrin cottin" on it, whaur Mister Menown leevs. As we cummed forrit till Mister Walker's she axed me wha leeved there.

Sez I, "Dochtor, that's Mister Walker's hoose, him that haes the fine big mill. A dinnae ken what Newton wud dae wi'oot him. A wush he had a wheen o' brithers as guid an' usefu' as himsel'."

Then A shewed Peggy the bridewell whaur they made me a mileeshayman. A kep' lukin' aboot tae see if A cud show her the Major, but the only yin A saw wuz a lang, strecht, grey-haired man, that A didnae ken, lukin' oot o' the wundey.

The teers wur stannin' in Peggy's e'en as we went past the Poor-hoose. Mony a time she talks aboot the puir auld buddys that's in there, bye their labour; an' the orfan waens that niver kent what it

wuz till hae the kindly han' or voice o' a mother till ease their troubles. Guid help them, the wee craters! Hooaniver it's a mercy that there's a place like it till cover their heids.

Then we cummed as far as the Rileway Brig, an' A shewed Peggy whaur the Mister Dicksons leev that can wun sae mony prizes ower the hale wurl fur their purty roses an' ither flooers. Weel, A turned the meer's heid till the left, an' went doon the auld road till whaur the show wuz, an' whun A got a bit doon alang there, wha diz A see but Sergint-Major Lane an' Sergint Kaghiley. The minit they notised me they baith saluted me in rael militery style.

"My!" sez Peggy, "luk at them twa nice gentlemen touchin' their caps till ye."

"Yis, Peggy," sez I; "them's twa o' my noble compenyins in erms!" an' A stappit the kert an' shuk han's wi' them baith. A wush ye had seen Mister Lane booin' till Peggy, an' pattin' wee Paddy unner the chin.

Sez Sergint Kaghiley till me, sez he—

"Mister Gordon, a daurnae aloo ye intil the show wi' the kert, fur," sez he, "the seekaterriers hae gien orders that nae convayances o' ony soart wull be alloed in."

"Oh, weel, weel," sez I, "we maun submit till the laws, mair espayshilly whun they're enforced by twa fine lukin' men like Mister Lane an' yersel'; but here's Peggy haes a lump o' butter fur till shew," sez I, "an' what am A till dae wi' her?"

Sez Mister Lane, sez he, "if Mistress Gordon wull aloo me," sez he, "A'll see her safe intil the place whaur it's till be left."

"Thank ye, sur," sez I; so the three o' us lifted Peggy oot, an' A left her wi' them an' went awa till pit up the kert in the yerd at the koffey-hoose.

Whun A got back Peggy met me alang the auld road, neer the place whaur A left her. She tell't me she had till gang intil a tent an' pye half-a-croon till Mr. Keghey; hooaniver, he spauk terble kin' till her, an' gied wee Paddy a penny an' gied her three tickets, an' she said whun she went intil the place fur showin' the butter there wuz terble confusion, an' she seen naebuddy till tak it frae her. At last a guid lukin' gentleman, wi' lang whuskers, that she heered the fowk ca'in' Mister Love, cummed up an offered till tak it, but she wudnae pert wi' it till she seen Mister Steevyson, the auctioneer, and she let him tak' it. She thinks a dale o' Mister Steevyson since yin day that he wuz doon at an auction in Bellycuddy.

Weel, ov coorse, there wuz nae gettin' in till twa o'clock. A micht a got in on my Pattern's ticket at yin o'clock, but A wudnae lee Peggy. A thocht the time wud niver cum roon, an' whun it did A wuznae lang till A wuz there. The furst place Peggy an' me made fur wuz the butter show, and A tell ye it fair astonished me. The place wuz crowded, an' A niver seen as muckle butter in yin place afore. A coonted awa aboot thirty big lumps forbye Peggy's yin, an' there wuz hunners o' prents o' butter. It wuz a' set in a great lang row an' covered wi' wire till keep the fowk frae tastin' it. Fur a' that A seen them puttin' their knives through the wires till get at it. A focht my road through the fowk like a man, an' cum to Peggy's butter at last. There it wuz, dabbit a' ower wi' the men's knives, but what tuk my e'en wuz the rid kerd on it. A furst prize fur Peggy! My, the licht left my e'en, an' a pu'd Peggy forrit till luk at it. Peggy's name wuz writ on the kerd, an' A kent the han' writin' in a mimit. It wuz Mister Smith, yin o' the judges, wrote it, an' he did it quer an' nice.

Sum fowk said Peggy's butter wuznae entitled till a prize ava, but they may a' talk as they like. There wuz nae deceivin' the jidges. They wurnae content wi' the luk o' butter on the ootside, or the taste o' it ether, fur Mister Smith, a'm tell't, had the nicest wee silver instrayment that iver ye saw, fur gaun richt intil the heart o' it.

A hae niver got sayin' a wurd yit aboot the Flooer Show. A hae nae wurds fit till describe it. A suppoas ye wur a' there, an' ye'll agree wi' me that it wuz a perfect gerden o' Aiden. My e'en wuz dazzled wi' the splendir o' the flooers, an' A wuz fair drunk wi' the darlin' smell o' them. A can feel the smell o' Mr. Dickson's roses on my auld coat till this day. A wuznae fit fur till read the hard names o' the plants an' flooers, but A cud see that a guid wheen o' fowk that A ken in an' aboot Newton won prizes. They had different clesses o' fowk; there wuz ammeters that keep gerners, an' then there wuz ammeters that dinnae keep gerners, an' then there wuz cottagers and tenent fermers. A suppoas that's the cless A wud a cum unner, but A had naethin' till show.

The fruit wuz that temptin' that A cudnae stan' lang till luk at it, an' if A cud a seen Mister Taylor, o' Mountstewart, A wud a axed him fur a wheen o' thon nice grapes he had.

A tuk mair delicht in lukin' at the vegetables an' fermers' produce nor ocht else. Mister Walker got a prize fur twa big lang, crookit, green things, as big as my erm. A heerd Major Hamilton ca'in them

new cummers, an' a wuz wonrin' if they had ocht till dae wi' " auld Cummer." Then there wuz beans, an' peas, an' carrots, an' turnips, an' prittas, an' corn, an' wheat, an' lint, an' iverything ye cud name. It wud a din the heart o' a vegytarian guid till a seen them—an' there wuz nae sign o' bad craps yonner.

A met Mister George Dickson as a wuz steppin' aboot, but he's growen that white A didnae ken him at furst. My, its nae time ava since him an' me wuz at skule thegither, in the hoose that used tae stan' whaur the merkets is noo. " Really, George," sez I, " A tuk ye fur yer da." A suppoas its the studyin' o' the roses that's makin' him luk sae white. Mister George tuk Peggy an' me a' through the show. He tuk me intil the tent whaur Peggy had pied her half-croon entrance money, an' wha diz A see there but my bould Barney Quin, that gangs wi' Mister Steevyson, handin' roon refreshments till the fowk.

The mileeshy band wuz there, an' it warmed up my heart till heer it. There they wur, puffin awa, an' Mister Whately wi' his wee rod in his han', wavin' it here an' there as if he wuz wheeshin' the ducks intil the barn. He's a nice man, Mister Whately, an' he cum up an' spauk till us. Sergint M'Cullough wuz there, tae. He used tae lern me the richt wae o' salutin'.

" Peggy, deer," sez I, " wud ye like tae see the dugs ? "

" A wud that, Rabin," sez she, " whun A em here A may as weel see a' that's gaun."

Rabert Foster wuz sittin' keekin' throo a wee hole in the wa', sellin' tickets fur the Dug Show, an' he wuznae lang o' servin' me. Wee Paddy wuz frichtened wi' the barkin' o' the dugs, an' sorra a bit o' him wud gang neer whaur they wur. A did not ken what till dae wi' him fur A didnae like tae loas my ticket money. Hooaniver, a wuz in grate luk, fur Dokter Parke an' Mister Baitty, o' the tan yerd, cum forrit and tuk cherge o' him. Then there wuz a man that keeps a seddler's shap doon aside the auld cross, cum up till us an' shewed us a' throo' the dugs. He wuz terble ceevil, altho' a niver spauk till the man but yince, whun A wuz in gettin' the auld meer's britchin mendit. Weel, the noise o' them dugs wuz maist sayrious, an' ye cudnae a heerd yer ain ears fur them. Mister Sam M'Kee, the honourable treasurer, cum up an' spauk till me.

" Weel Rabin," sez he, " hoo dae ye like the show ? "

" Its furstrate," sez I, " furstrate ; did yer dug tak' a prize ? " sez I.

" Na," sez he, " a had nae luk this time."

" A'm sorry fur that," sez I " shair Peggy got a prize fur her butter.

" A'm gled till hear it," sez he, " an' A suppoas ye'll be pittin' that in the *Gazette* ?"

" A haenae had time tae write ony fur it this lang time," sez I, " but man, a wuz rael weel pleesed wi' that poem ye wrote fur it aboot ' the road till the tree.' "

He lauched at that, but A hadnae time till say ony mair fur the men cum up till clear the groun' fur the horse jumpin'.

Whun a cum back till whaur a left wee Paddy, Mister Baitty had him up in his erms, an' Dokter Parke had been awa an' brocht him a stick o' barley shugar.

There wuz the maist dreedful bit o' crushin' an' husselin' that iver A cummed throo' in my life gettin' intil the place fur the horse jumpin'. We had till gang throo' a gate, but heth they suin put the gate oot o' that, fur a wheen fowk jist laid hoult o' it an' liftit it cleen aff its hinges. Peggy wud a been kilt if it hadnae been fur Mister Parr. She got wedged that ticht that she wuz liftit richt aff her feet. Mister Parr happened till be aside her, but she didnae ken him, the crater, an' sez she till him, " Sur, deer, a wush ye wud help me."

" A wull, mem," sez he, lauchin', an' wi' that he tuk his twa elbows an' shoved the fowk richt an' left till he got her till the gate. Weel, didn't her skirts get gruppit sumwae in the gate, but Peggy wuz peggin' on, an' sez Mister Parr, sez he—

" Ye'll teer yer dress mem."

" Ah, let it teer awa," sez she, " sae lang as A get in."

Mister Tam Dugan, that leevs near the monument, had advised me till buy tickets fur the " big stan'," an' so A did, but whun Peggy saw it, A had sayrious bother gettin' her up ontil it. She wuz feared that the wecht o' us micht tummel the train ower on us, an' if it hadnae been fur Mister Copeland an' Mister Erturs that cum forrit an' raisoned wi her, no a peg wud she a went. There wuz a wheen o' fellows carried on aboot the gates an' on the grun' in a maist redeekilus fashin, an' A wuz very neer gaun doon aff the big stan' twa or three times an' puttin' a wheen o' them oot by the neck. A saw Dokter Parke an' twa or three ither gentilmen pittin' fellows oot, an' yin o' them wuz that bothersum that naebuddy cud wark wi' him but Mister Parr. A wuz thinkin' o' axin' Major Hamilton till bring oot the mileeshy staff an' pit them unner my cherge wi' orders tae fire blank kertridges. Man, we wud suin a scattered them !

A met Mister Rabert Keghey, that used till be the Meer o' Newton. Sez I, " Did ye hear that Rabin Byers wuz gaun till enter his meer, Jinney, fur the jumpin' ? "

" A did heer it talkit aboot," sez he, " but a'm feered Jinney wud suin cum till grief. Hooaniver," sez he, " there's a man ca'd Byers in fur the jumpin', but A think it's no Rabin."

" Man," sez I, " but A wud like tae see him an' the meer gaun ower yon big shough."

" Ay, it wud be a treet," sez he. " Rabin wuz in wi' me the tither day fur a pun' o' paint fur the shafts o' his car, an' A said A wuz feered he had haen Rabin Gordon on his car. He got cleen mad, an' said he wudnae let sich a kerekter cum neer him fur that the last time ye wur in the Market Hoose ye said that muckle aboot him that he had till gang till the expense o' gettin' a bar o' iron tae fassen on the back o' his car."

Weel, there wuz aboot a cupple o' dizen horses, an twa darlin' wee ponies went in fur the jumpin', an' it wuz a rael treet till see them. There wuz sum o' them, an whun they cum till the dooble dyke they did egsakly what my auld meer din wi' me, they jist stappit an' lukit at it. Ithers o' them went ower it in gran style, an' thonner wuz Mister Davison's horse happit ower iverythin', jist as easy as oor dug jumps throo a hoop. There wuz yin horse that A think hadnae seen the dyke, fur it jist run ram stam up against it. My, the spirit of the man wuz ower ocht, fur when the horse stappit he jumpit cleen ower its heid, but bein' ta'en at a short, he fell intil the water.

Puir crater, he wuz a' dirtied. Peggy wuz terble vexed fur him, an' she said she wuz gie an' gled A wuznae amang them, fur she wuz shair A cud not a sut on auld Judey's back.

It wuz a' ower at last, but it tuk the fowk a lang, lang time till cleer oot o' the place. A waited till A seen the fireworks gaun up in the Square. My, but it wuz gran' till see yon bleezin' stars an' things like comets fleein' awa up till the very sky. A wuz stanin' at yin o' the places whaur the man wuz pitin' them aff, an' A micht a loast my life. He had aboot a dizin' o' them unner his erm, an' they a' went aff wi' a crack like thunner, an' ye wud a seen them happin, and jumpin' a' ower the square, an' the fowk fleein' in a' direkshins.

Weel, my freens, a maun bid ye guid nicht, an' may we a' leev till see mony, an' mony's

THE NEWTOWNERDS FLOWER SHOW.

ROBIN ON THE ICE.

YIN day, the time o' the hard frost in the wunter, A went intil Newton, tae buy yin o' thon "Syracuse" Aisy Washin' Machines fur Peggy. Peggy an' I were in yince afore, an' had a' the wurks o' the washer explainit to us. A' ye wud hae tae dae wuz tae pit the claes in at yin en' an' the wud cum oot at the tither en' as white as snaw. Weel Peggy has cleen gang aff her heid ever since talkin' aboot that washer, so A made up my min' tae get her yin, fur ye ken whun a wumman wants ocht ye micht as weel let her hae it, or there's nae leevin' wi' her ava. So efter we had settled aboot the washer fur Peggy, who shud cum in but a Mister Broon, that A kent fur mony a year, he had a strap roon his neck wi' a pair o' steel things tied on it. Sez I, "What dae ye ca' them things," sez he, "Thems skytes, an' am gang awa tae a curlin' match, an' if ye'll cum wi' me, ye'll see sum gran' sport."

Weel A went, an' lo an' behold ye, he niver stappit till he had me awa' as far as Kiltonga, whaur a gentilman o' the name o' Johnson carries on a gran' bleechin' concern. A tell't Mister Broon he cud gang like a steem ingin. He had nae peety on my stootness an' my short legs, an' if a wuznae oot o' puff its a queer thing. A forgot and forgied him it a' whun we got till the place. We went through a gate an' climmed ontil a dyke, an' the deer man, a niver did see sich a sicht in a' my days. There wuz a grate big dam a' frozen ower wi' ice, an' a suppoas there wuznae less nor a hunner ladies an' gentlemen fleein' oer it jist like birds.

"In the name o' guidness, sir," sez I, "what is this onywae?"

"They're skytin', Rabin," sez he" did ye niver see that afore?"

"Na, man, A niver did," sez I; "A hae seen fellows slidin' on the lint holes, but the like o' this A niver lukit at, an' A declare the weemin's as guid as the men at it."

"Far better," sez he; "luk, thonner's yer meinister's dochtors!"

Jest wi' that they fleed by me like the very wun.

"A declare it is," sez I. "Railly its like a temptin' o' Providens, an' yet it cannae be a sin, fur thonners yin, twa, three meinisters birlin' awa' ower ocht. Hoo dae they dae it ava?" sez I.

Sez Mister Broon, sez he, "Dae ye see them things that young wuman's pittin' on her feet?"

" A dae," sez I, " A hae notised a terble lot o' fowk weerin' them things strung roon their necks this while back."

" Weel, that's what they ca' skytes," sez he " an' ye hae jist till pit them on yer feet, an' when ye gang ontil the ice ye'll ken the rest."

" Oh A'll no try it," sez I.

The young lady aside us lauched, an' said she wud len' me a pair o' skytes that she had wi' her.

" Na, thank ye, mem," sez I, " A wud be afeered."

She lauched an' said A needna be scaured whun wee boys an' lasses o' three an' fower yeer auld teer awa at it like fun.

An' railly she said the truth, fur A coonted a dizen waens. There wuz far mair, but they wur fleein' aboot that fast that A cudnae coont them a'. A seen yin wee chap aboot the size o' my gran waen wi' knee breeks an' blue rig an' fur stokins, an' a thing on his heid jest like a hey ruck. My ! he wuz flinging his erms roon his heid an' fleein' aboot ower ocht. Ivery yin wuz lukin' at him, an' A axed a man that wuz gaun by wha he wuz.

" Oh, that's oor skytin' mester," sez he, " an he's gien us a lesson the day."

" The deer man," sez I, " but it bates ocht what waens ir cumin' till. Auld fowks is nae whaur noo-a-days. A'll bate ye his da cudnae dae it as weel. Luk hoo he can whurl his erms roon his heid."

Jist wi' that a big lang man cummed doon a clatter on his face, an' the fowk a' lauched at him.

A strange man went till help him up, an' whun A lukit roon, Mister Broon wuz busy helpin' the young lady till fessin' on her skytes.

" Noo, Rabin," sez he, " this young lady haes anither pair o' skytes, an' she says if you put them on she'll tak yer han' on the ice."

" Weel, what cud A dae ? They made me sit doon on the snaw, an' they strappit the skytes on my feet, an' helpit me up. It wuz vera weel they kep' a grup o' me, or as shair as daith A wud a fell on my mooth an' nose.

" Oh, railly, A cud not trevil on them things," sez I.

" Yer no' wantit till trevil," sez the young lady, " ye'll be a' richt whun ye get on the ice."

She tuk me by the han', and Mister Broon begood tae lauch.

" Mister Broon, dear," sez I, " tak' my tither han'."

So he did, an' A steppit ontil the ice. A hale lot o' fowk stappit skytin' an' cum forrit till watch me. A seen Mister Rabert Keghey,

an' Mister Mertin, the meinister, an' Mister Russell, the returney, an' a gentleman that belangs till the heid offis o' the Bellycuddy rileway, an' young Mister M'Vane, an' Mister Erturs, an' dizens o' fowk that A cannae min'. Thinks I, A maun dae sumthin' gran' noo,— so A whuspered till the young lady till tell me what till dae.

" Turn yer richt fit a weethin' on the side, an' streck oot wi' the left," sez she.

" Wull A dae it hard ?" sez I.

" As hard as ye like," sez she.

" Stan' oot o' the road if ye pleese," sez I, till a wheen o' the fowk ; A'm gaun till streck oot, an' A micht hurt sum o' ye."

They skyted aff richt an' left. Weel, A wuz determined to show them what A cud dae, so A drawed a lang breth an' gied my left fit a shuv forrit as hard as A wuz able. My ! A thocht the wurl' wuz at an end ! Baith feet flew frae unner me, an' A got a crack on the back o' my heid that micht a split my skull. A seen mair stars nor iver A did in my life, an' the nixt thing A kent wuz the fowk carryin' me ower till the dyke. They laid me doon, an' Mister Keghey brocht me my hat an' axed me wuz my heid hurt. " Rabin, deer," sez he, " ye put on ower muckle steem."

" Tak them unnateral clogs aff my feet," sez I. " A cud skyte far better if them steel shods wuznae on them."

My ! they did lauch. A'll ashair ye afore A try it again A'll hae a while's practis on the horse hole.

A gethered mysel' up an' lukit roon me.

" Dae ye feel wakely ?" sez Mister Keghey.

" Oh, na, yer honour," sez I, " A'll be a' richt in a wheen o' minits whun my heid settles."

Sez Mister Broon, sez he, " mebbe if ye had a wee drap o' pale sherry it wud dae ye guid."

Jist wi' that Mister Cherley Russell cummed forrit wi' a bit o' paper an' a leed pencil in his han', an' sez he—

" Mister Gordon, ye maun pye yer fittin."

" A hae pied gie an' weel," sez I. " A hae neer knockit my heid aff."

" A only want tuppence," sez he ; " ivery yin that pits on the skytes maun pye that fur the sweepers."

" Weel, weel, Mister Russell," sez I, " A cudnae refuse ye, for A hae lang kent you an yer da afore ye."

So A pu'd oot my wee rid bag. A had jist yin penny-piece an'

fower fardins. Mister Keghey seen that A wuz hard up, an' he pied the tuppence fur me. A lauched, an' sez I—

"Sur, a freen in need is a freen indeed."

"Oh, yer no the furst man in trubble A hae releeved," sez he; "ye ken it's mair blissid till give nor till receive."

"Weel, sur," sez I, "that's a comfort, for if ye leev till a' the fowk ye help pyes ye back ye'll be an auld man."

Wi' that Dokter Parke wuz cumin' forrit, an' Mister Broon cried at him. He seen me rubbin' the back o' my heid, an' sez he—

"Why, Rabin, what haes happint?"

"Oh, deed, sur," sez I, "it's nae lee till say an auld fule's the warst o' a' fules. What dae ye think, dokter, but A wuz tryin' till skyte, an' A hae vera neer got mysel' kilt."

My! he did lauch, an' he made me show him whaur A wuz hurt.

"Railly an' truly," sez he, "there's a wee aberazhin here," an' he put his finger on the sair place.

"What's that agen?" sez I.

He seen A wuz scaured, an' sez he—

"Oh, it'll no signify; it's only an ertyfeeshal wound."

"Na, heth, it's naethin' o' the sort," sez I, "there's naethin' ertyfeeshal aboot it. It's a real doonricht brauken heid, an' if it moartifies A'll mebbe loas my life."

"It's no that bad," sez he, an' he tuk a wee bit o' plester oot o' his pocket book, an' stuk it on the sair place.

"What put it in yer heid till gang on the ice onyway?" sez he.

"Oh, deed," sez I, "it wuz yin o' them bonny lasses. They're that nice they wud tempt a buddy till dae ocht. Dokter, dear, dinnae hae onythin' tae dae wi' them, fur they're the root o' a' evil."

He lauched ower ocht, an' sez he—

"A'm shair she wuz very sorry fur ye."

"Na, no yin bit," sez I. "She jist lauched at me. Luk the wae she's skytin' aboot thonner like a swalla in Simmer. Sorra a hair she cares a had been kilt."

"Oh, they lauch at me as weel as at you, Rabin," sez he.

"Shair you dinnae skyte," sez I.

"Oh, indeed A dae," sez he.

"An' dae ye iver fa'?" sez I.

" A fell my hale length this very day," sez he.

" Did iver !" sez I. " Man ye wud cum doon a quer plert !"

" Ay, ye hae the advantage there, Rabin," sez Mister Keghey, " whun you gang doon ye haenae far tae fa'."

They tuk the skytes aff me, an' helpit me up, an' said we wud gang awa nixt the tither dam till see the curlin'.

" Wait a minit," sez I, " till A get anither luk at the skyters."

The deer man, A wush A cud dae it ! A stud an' lukit roon me. Mister Moreyshon, that preeches in Bellygrainey, an' Mister Byrn, o' Newton, wur teerin' ower the ice as weel an ony o' them. Puir Mister Byrn cum doon his hale length on the ice, an' half a dizen o' imperent wee fellows rowled ower the tap o' him. A seen a man frae Cummer that shud a taen twa pair o' skytes, fur he wuz gaun on baith han's an' feet, an' he tumbled the wull-cat twa or three times. Thon wud be anither skytin' mester a'll warrant. A notised that ye shud wear Tam-o-Shanters, an' cut yer breeks aff at the knee afore ye can get on weel.

Whun A wuz tired there we went to luk at the curlin'.

The dam had darlin' ice on it. A seen a wheen o' rael nice gentlemen on it. There wuz Mister Dunlap that used tae keep the hotel aside the Thayter Royal, an' Mister Doag, that A bocht a big cheese frae yin time fur a christnin' perty, an' Mister Hunter, an' a wheen ithers frae Bilfast, that A didnae ken. Then there wuz my dacent freen, Mister George Dickson, an' Sandy Dickson, an' Sandy o' the Mill, an' Mister Wulyim Mayne, an' his son Tammas, an' the twa Mr. Johnsons that haes the gran bleechworks, an' that the dams belang till. A heerd them tellin' that it wuz Mister Johnson brocht the game o' curlin' a' the wae frae Scotlan'. He shuk hans wi' me very kindly an' explained the game till me, an' A watched them a guid while. They hae great big stanes, the size o' a cheese wi' hannels on them an' ribbons tied till the hannels, an' its fur wha can pit their stane nearest a roon ring that they cut in the ice. My ! thon men wur as happy as if they had been wee laddies shootin' merbles at skule. A wheen o' them had beesoms in their hans, an' whun a stane wuznae cumin fast eneuch they wud flee forrit an' sweep afore it like mad. The tell't me that the best stanes ir got frae Ailsa Craig, or what we ca' Paddy's Milestane. A'll hae a crack wi' Mester Johnson some day. A wunner wud he start a Curlin' Club at Bellycuddy.

The Newton men won the game, an' then they a' went fur lunch an' made me gang wi' them. We went till a big shed for a' the wurl like Paddy M'Quillan's barn, whaur we chrisined the twins. There wuz as muckle Irish stew as wud a din an ermy, an' plenty o' " pale sherry " an' lemonade, an' a'll ashair ye the stew wuz a gran, treet on a cauld day. A'm shair the man in cherge o' the big pot did wunner whaur the stew went till. Some o' the fowk cudnae fin' in their heart till quat it. Yin man sut lang after the rest had din, suppin' awa as quate as ye like. Mr. Sandy Dickson, o' the Mill, trampit his fit, but he jist lauched. At last Mr. George Dickson, an' a wheen mair got roon' him an' pu'd him frae the table, fur they tell't him he wudnae be fit till play yin bit in the nixt game. A wuz scaured till gang neer him on the ice fur fear the wecht o' him wud brek it.

A moved a vote of thanks till Mr. Johnson an' the gentlemen that purvided the lunch, an' said A wud tak the liberty o' requistin' Mister Keghey till seconds it, as nae man in Newton cud make a better speech. Efter that they a' cried at him till gie them a sang. He sae there wuz nae use refusin' an' so he lauched an' stud up on the furm, and here wuz the sang he sung :—

THE CURLERS.

Oh, would ye hear what roarin' cheer
  There comes with frosty weather, O ;
Then come away to Bradshaw's Brae,
  And spend a day together, O !
Brave Sibbald Johnston leads the way,
  'Twas he first taught us curlin', O,
And never is his heart so gay
  As when the stanes gang whurlin', O !

And then comes Mayne, George Dickson, Kane,
  Hugh Simms, and Charley Russell, O,
With full a score, all in a roar,
  And eager for the tussle, O !
We muster on Kiltonga rinks,
  With brooms so light and handy, O,
No royal curler ever thinks
  Of playin' fop or dandy, O !

A shot we try at " chap an' lie,"
  At " hogs " we luk sae dreary, O;
Then fling the stane wi' micht an' main,
  And " chip the winner " cheery, O!
Then when the game is played and booked,
  The word is given, " Luncheon, O!"
Of Irish stew, so nicely cooked,
  We all fall to the munchin', O!

Come, fill each glass, and let it pass,
  To wet our thirsty whistles, O!
And here's a hand from Ireland
  To Scotland—land of thistles, O!
For Johnstons give a ringing cheer—
  'Twas they that brought the curlin', O!
And may they join us many a year
  To help us at the whurlin', O!

THE NEWTOWNERDS MILEESHY.

My First Day's Drill.

IT'S no' an easy jab tae hudwink Peggy. Ye ken it wuz my intenshun no' tae say a wurd till her aboot my hevin' joined the Mileeshy till A wud be an offiser, an' then A wud walk in some day wi' a big lang glitterin' sord unner ma erm, an' a hale lot o' medals on ma breest. Ma plans wur a' knokit in the heid, an' A'll tell ye the wae it happened. A wuz in the barn yin day busy gaun through the 'expensive noshins,' as the serjint that drilled me that day ca'd them, an' A had swung ma erms up an' doon an' back an' forrit till A wuz tired. Then a begood a steppin' aboot the wae an offiser wud dae, an' gien' the wurd o' cummand at the very tap o' my voice, whun wha shud step in bit Peggy, an' sez she,

" Rabin, dear, what unner the sun ails ye?"

" Naethin' ava, dochter," sez I; a'm jist tryin' the strenth o' my voice."

" Cum awa in the house fur yer tay," sez she " an' awa A went, an' A deklare bit afore A had the furst cup drunk she had wheedled

the hale news oot o' me. Weel, whun the cat wuz oot o' the bag A thocht A micht as weel let her heer iverythin', an' so A did."

"Bit, waen dear," sez she, "hoo wull iver ye be fit tae stan' sich fatigue? Ye maun tak' guid meat an' see that ye hae a comfirtable hoose tae stap in."

"It wud be nae sodjerin' that," sez I, "an' A'm determined tae gang through the reglar coorse wi' the tither men. Luk at the Queen," sez I; "A wuz reedin' in the paper hoo that yin o' her sons wuz gaun tae join the ermy, an' she said he beat tae tak' his turn at iverythin' jist like the rest o' the men."

"Weel, weel, Rabin," sez she, "A neednae say mair, fur whun ye tak' ocht intil yer heid there's nae turnin' o' ye."

My, bit A did think lang fur the sayventh o' April, an' whun it cum A wuz in Newton afore a guid wheen fowk had got oot o' their beds. A made my wae up till the Bridewell, an' seen a man in uneyform stanin' there, an' sez he,

"Ir ye a rekroot?"

"Yis, sir," sez I.

"Wha's yer serjint?" sez he.

"A dinnae ken, sur," sez I, "bit A'll be obleeged if ye'll pit me unner some nice aisy man."

Jist wi' that a fine big cliver man cummed steppin' forrit.

Sez I, "A wud like tae be unner that man."

He lauched, an' sez he, "why, that's Mester Lamb, the serjint-mayjer."

Jist as he had said them words, dizn't the gentleman birl roon on his heel, an' sez he,

"Wur ye speekin' till me?"

The man A wuz talkin' till lauched, an' sez he,

"Here's a rekroot, an' he says he wud like ye tae drill him."

Mester Lamb lukit at me as pleesent as ocht, an' sez he, "is it poasible that a man o' yer age wud be a rekroot?"

"Yis, sir," sez I, "A think its the duty o' ivery man, wuman, an' waen tae serve their Queen an' country in these times o' war."

He lauched, an' sez he, "that wud gie us a big ermy, indeed. Whaur dae ye cum frae?" sez he.

"Frae Bellycuddy, sur," sez I.

"An' yer name?" sez he.

"Rabin Gordon, yer honnor," sez I.

" A hae heerd it afore," sez he ; an' then he turned tae the tither man, an' sez he, " wha's squad is he in ?"

" A wuz gaun tae pit him in M'Cormick's," sez he.

" Na, pit him in Foster's," sez he, " M'Cormick wud scaur the life oot o' him," an' he went awa lauchin' ower ocht.

Sez I, " that's the nicest man iver A seen ; he's as gentle as a lamb, an' yit he's as gran-like as a lion."

" Ay, we a' like him," sez the man.

Jist wi' that a serjint cummed forrit oot o' the yard, an' sez he.

" Is Rabin Gordon here ?"

" Yis sur," sez I.

" Cum here," sez he, " ye belang till me ; gang roon the corner there," sez he, " an' fa' intil the back raw o' the first company ye see."

" Em A no' ower big tae gang intil the back raw, sur ?" sez I.

He made nae anser, an' so A tuk my place. Then he cried ower a lot o' names, an' sum o' the men ansered, bit A seen that a guid wheen hadnae cum forrit. Weel, he merched us a' intil the Bridewell, an' wha dae ye think wuz there bit Doctor Mertin, an' whun A cum forrit till him he lauched, an' sez he, " Ha, my Trojan, ir you here ? Strip up yer erm," sez he. Weel, he grapit baith my erms an my legs, an' A said till him, sez I.

" Sur, ye examined me afore."

" A ken that," sez he, " an' yer a' richt ; soun' as a bell an' fu' o' mussels."

" A beg yer pardin, sur," sez I, " A'm a grate man fur fresh cockles, bit A haenae et a mussel this mony a lang day."

He jist lauched an' begood a feelin' the nixt man, an' he tell't him he micht get pyed aff fur he wuznae fur the service.

Weel, ivery yin o' us got a big bunnel o' claes an' direckshuns hoo tae pit them on, an' whun we whur tae gether for drill, an' then we wur merched awa in lumps till the hoose whaur we wur tae ludge. It wuz a brave cleen place, an' a man tell't me that the doctor had been there afore us lukin' tae see that the beds wur cleen an' weel aired. Sez I, " he's a rael kin' thochtfu' man tae tak' sae muckle trouble, fur A'm shair the maist o' us is rank strangers till him."

A wush ye had a seen us gettin' on oor claes. Sum o' the fellows lukit like rael gentlemen whun they got on their new things insteed o' their auld korderoy breeks an' torn jackets, bit for my pert a cudnae get mine on me ava. Nether my breeks nor my coat wud button on

me, so A gethered them up an' went awa tae the tailor an got them fixed. I deklare bit yon kit wuz like a packman's bunnel an' there wuz mair things in it nor A cud name. Then there wuz a big thing that A tuk at first tae be a quilt for my bed, bit a man tell't me it wuz a tapcoat for the wat wather. Whun A cummed till my shoon they wur as rid as bluid amainst, an' A wuz ashamed o' them. A wud a kep' on my ain yins only A wuz feered o' breckin' the rules. My! A wuz neer gettin' intill a row about it, for whun we a' gethered agen, the sergint notised my feet, an' sez he,

"Why didn't ye blacken yer boots, Rabin?"

"A had nae blackenin', sur," sez I.

"Did ye no see a tin box o' it in yer kit?" sez he.

"A did see a box," sez I, "bit A thocht it wuz mustard, mebbe."

Some o' the offisers begood a lauchin', an' A wuz tell't they wud forgie me, bit A wuznae fur tae dae it agen. Then we got saxpence a-piece, an' wur tell't tae gang awa tae oor 'bullets,' an' no' to be oot later nor ten o'clock, or the pickets wud catch us. Sez I till a man aside me, "Wha ir the pickets?" "I dinnae ken," sez he, "unless they'll be sum kin' o' kidnappers."

A steppit up till the sergint, an' sez I,

"Sur, A thocht A wuz tae get a shillin' a day. It's no' that A care fur the money," sez I, "bit A thocht mebbe ye had made a mistak'."

"It's a' richt," sez he, "the tither saxpence is tae pye yer ludgin'-hoose. Bit A'm sayin', Rabin," sez he, "A thocht there wuz sumthin' odd aboot ye, an' A see noo what it is—awa an' get that lang berd shaved aff."

"Na, man, A wull not," sez I, "A'll loas the sityeashin first."

"Weel, the Capten will talk till ye," sez he.

"Na, he'll no say a wurd," sez I, "fur A tell't him A wud get my daith o' cauld wi'oot it, an' he said that uner the cirkumstances he wud let me keep it on."

"Noo gang awa till Wallace's an' buy a wee penny stick," sez he, "an niver gang oot wi'oot it."

"Wull ye no' let me carry my ain stick?" sez I.

"Na, that wud niver dae," sez he, an' so A went an' did as A wuz bid. Mester Wallace said A shud get my futtygraff tuk in my uneyform, bit A said A wud wait till A had my sord an' gun.

Weel, whaur dae ye think they drilled us bit awa in the Pig Market, an' dae ye know, bit A jist said it wuz rael thochtfu' o' the Capten,

an' A think it wuz on my acoont he din it. He had heerd me sayin' that A wud think shame doon in the Square afore sae mony fowk, an' so A suppoas he thocht the Pig Market wud be a nice quate place. An' so it wuz, for there's a big heech wa' a' roon it that naebuddy can see ower, an' there wuz a man stud at the gate tae keep the croods oot. My, A wuz feerd Mester Henery, o' the Kronikle, or sum o' the ither fowk that kens me, wud cum in, bit A didnae see yin barrin' Mester M'Kee, an' he stud lukin' at us a lang time.

Dae ye know, bit A begood tae fin' my bluid warmin' up, an' whun A seen the men a' gettin' intil order A wuz as prood as ocht. A seen Capten Oarem steppin' up an' doon wi' a big lang sord unner his erm, an' he wuz as careless like wi' it as if it had been a bit o' a stick. He's a terble nice man, an' the very picter o' his da, that A hae had mony a lang crack wi'. He had nice black claes on him, and so had a wheen smert-lukin' offisers that wur alang wi' him. A wuz prood tae see young Mester Broonlow there, an' A notised a young man wi' grey claes on him, an' a gun in his han'. They tell't me he had cum a' the way frae Edinburow. Afore we had din wi' oor exercise, Capten Hamilton cum ridin' in on horseback and a hale lot o' offisers wi' darlin' sords in their hans. A wonner what the Capten haes din wi' his white horse, fur yon wuz a broon yin he had. He wuz lukin' as fresh an' as smert as iver; an' he kept ridin' aboot, an' yince as he passed whaur A wuz he lauched at me. A cudnae help lukin' at Mester Lamb, the Serjint Mayjer. My! if ye seen the size o' him. An' he's as strecht as a rush. He keeps up his heid an' his breest oot, an' he wud fould his erms, an' merch back an' forrit like a lord. A'm shair he jist did it tae set us a guid exemple, an' A wud gie a' A'm wurth tae be able tae walk like him. If yon man had us a' richt drilled, A wudnae be yin bit scaured tae gang wi' him tae Afrekey. A wud like tae see him gettin' a' guid swutch wi' his sword at auld "Katch-a-click-wire." But A maun tell ye aboot the drillin'. The serjint put us a wee bit aff yin anither, an' there wuz aboot a dizin an a half unner him, an' sez he,

"Noo, tak the puseeshin o' sojers; keep well forrit on yer taes, pit oot yer chists an' keep yer han's by yer sides."

Yin fellow jist afore me leaned that much forrit on his taes that if A hadnae gruppit him he wud a fell on his face.

Then the serjint cried oot, "Shan?"

No yin spauk, bit we lukit at yin anither, an' the serjint cried "Shan!" agen that lood that A jumpit, an' sez I,

" A think he's no here, sur."

He had a richt laugh at me, an' sez he, " A'll show ye what A mean," an' with that he tuk my twa hans an 'pit them doon by my sides, an' he tell't me tae bring my ither fut up till the tither, an' tae stan' strecht, an' then sez he,

" Noo, boys, that's " shan."

Efter the serjint had kept us fur aboot an hoor daein' " Shan," he cried at us fur tae " nummer," an' he made the man at the en' o' the raw shout out " yin," an' the nixt " twa," an' sae on. We had tae gang ower that a hale lot o' times, an' then he cried at us—

" Stan' at ease !"

A thocht he said " gang on yer knees," an' the word wuznae well oot o' his mooth till A dropit doon on my knees on the hard sherp stanes till A knockit the skin aff them. My, A wush the Capten wud mak them sweep yon stanes awa.

The serjint cummed forrit till me, an' sez he,

" Did ye fa', Rabin ?"

" No, sur," sez I, " emn't A daein' what ye bid me ?"

My ! he lauched ower ocht, an' it wuznae lang till A wuz up on my feet agen, an' sez he,

" Cum boys, luk at me, an' A'll show ye hoo tae stan' at ease."

Weel, he lifted up his richt han' as heech as his breast, an' his left han' as heech as his shooder, an' then he brocht his left han' doon on the yin alow it till it crackit ower ocht, an' then he let them baith fa' doon. Then he drawed yin o' his legs back an' A thocht the tither yin wuz brauk it wuz that bent. " Noo," sez he, " whuniver A tell ye tae stan' at ease that's what ye ir tae dae."

My ! the ermy diz bate ocht. We got aff fur oor denners then an' went till the bullet hooses fur them, an' A deklare we got a brave denner. The offisers ir quer an' carefu'. We hadnae got well sut doon till in cum yin o' them wi' his lang sord rattlin'. There wuz a serjint wi' him, and the minit he apened the daur he struck it a slap wi' his stick till he scaured me, an' sez he, as lood as iver he cud speek,

" Shan !"

The fellows a' drappit their prittas as if they had been burnin' them, an jumpit till their feet. Sez the man wi' the sord, sez he.

" Hae ye got yer denners, boys ?"

" Na, no yit sur," sez I.

" Weel yer in a fair wae till it," sez he, an' awa he went.

We got skerries an' Amerikay bacon till oor denner. A axed a man aside me if that wuz what we wud aye get.

"Oh, na," sez he, "yin day we'll get prittas an' bacon, an' the nixt day we'll get bacon an' prittas."

"Weel, that'll aye be a change," sez I.

"We'll get mair nor that," sez anither man, "fur a man the ca' Burke brings doon big kert loads o' beef frae Bilfast ivery day."

"A ken them richtly," sez I, "an' rael dacent fowk they ir, an' keep the best o' meat."

Efter we tuk oor denner we went back till the Pig Market, an' whun the serjint had pit us intil raws agen he said he wantit till teech us tae turn by nummers—A wuz nummer 9, an' whun he cried at me A birled roon wi' my back till him. He said that wuznae the wae, bit that he wud suin lern me. He tell't me fur tae keep my left fut stuk till the groun', an' tae birl roon on it like a pivet. Then he tell't me fur tae bring my richt fut forrit till my heel wud be agenst the hollow o' my tither, an' then birl roon. Then A wuz tae bring my left fut back an' pit the ba' o' my richt fut agenst my left heel, an' birl roon—yon man haes a heid on him like an almanek. He made me hae half left birls, an' half richt birls, an' three quarter birls till A wuz that dizzy A cud harly stan' on my feet. Sum o' the fellows got that seek that they had till gang oot o' the raws an stan' up agen the wa' till they got better. A notised a terble smert wee man jist aboot my ain heecht steppin' aboot us gran' as an offiser wi' a kin' o' a bress bugle in his han', an' every noo an' then he wud pit it till his mooth an' gie a wheen toots on it. If it hadnae been that A had tae pye sich attenshun till the serjint's orders A wud a haen a quer lot o' things tae tell ye that A seen. Sum o' the fellows hadnae got their uneyform on them, bit there they wur jist as they drappit the plews, an' quer lukin' defenders o' the country they wur. A wush ye had seen yon chap aside me wi' a pair o' auld korderoy breeks on him that short that they didnae cum far unner his knees; then he had an auld blue patched jacket on him, an' a big muffler roon his neck. A lauched cleen oot when A seen him merchin' alang wi' his hans' stuk doon by his sides. My heid was sair wi' the shoutin' o' the serjints, fur they wur a' cryin' at the tap o' their voices, "Yin, twa, three, turn!" "Square yer heels!" "Shan!" "Stan' easy!" "As ye wuz!" an' a hale lot o' wurds that A haenae lerned yit.

At last Capten Hamilton cum ridin' up, an sez he,

" Noo, boys, A want tae speek till ye. If ony o' ye gets drunk," sez he, " A'll fine ye in half-a-croon, an' the nixt time efter that A'll fine ye in five shillin' an' gie ye pack drill. Dinnae smoke in the streets," sez he, " nor dinnae chou tabaka, or spit in the streets, bit konduck yersel's like men an' hayroes; keep yer han's oot o' yer pockits except whun ye meet a puir buddy an' can spare them a copper. Nane o' ye maun gang hame wi'oot my leeve, or if ye dae A'll sort ye, for A hae got a plan in my heid that A'll carry oot."

My! A wuz rael weel pleesed, an' whun the drill was ower the Capten seen me lauchin' an' he cummed up till me an' axed me hoo A wuz gettin' on.

" Middlin,' sur," sez I; " A'm no used tae this soart o' thing, an' my erms ir terble sair gaun throo' the 'expensive notions,' sae lang."

He lauched, an' sez he—

" Ye'll suin get ower that, an' afore the day o' the big review cums roon ye'll be fit tae tak cherge o' a company."

" A'm muckle obleeged fur the complement," sez I.

" Ye maun cum doon till the mess wi' us some nicht," sez he, " an' we'll hae a while's fun." and wi' that he galloped awa.

Thinks I, " it wud be a mess if A wuz there."

My! A wonner wull A get on weel, an' wull A iver be a jeneral. A'm gaun tae ax hame frae Seterday till Munday, an' A'll hae quer fun shewin' Peggy hoo they drill me.

A made a mistak' in the name o' the Serjint-Mayjer. Its Mester Lane they ca' him, an' he's takin' a grate interest in me. He aye cums up an' speeks till me no' tae hurt mysel'. A'm tell't they're gaun tae merch a' the rekroots roon the toon wi' a nice band o' music in front o' them, an' Capten Hamilton ridin' on horseback. Won't that be nice!

The serjints hae a' tuk a terble noshin o' me, an' there haes been sae mony axin' for my futtygraff that a maun pit on my uneyform an' gang in an get Mester Wallace tae tak' it fur me.

A haenae time tae tell ye ony mair noo, bit ye'll likely heer frae me agen.

'DIPPLEMASSY' (*Diplomacy*).

A NICHT AT THE THEAYTER ROYAL, BELFAST.

MY, a wonner if it's a sin tae gang tae the theayter. A hope no', fur A wuz there the tither nicht, an' it's a lang time since A had sich a treet.

A had some bizness tae dae in Bilfast, an' whun A got it settled, a ca'd tae see a freen o' mine, an' he wud insist on me tae stap a' nicht. "Mony a nicht A hae slep' in yer hoose," sez he, "an' shairly ye'll stap wi' me for yince."

Weel, A didnae like tae be stiff, an' so A said A wud. His mistress is aboot as smert, kin'-hearted a wuman as iver A seen, an' she had the kettle boilin' an' the tay on the table afore A wuz weel sut doon. Whun we wur at oor tay he sez till me, sez he,

"Noo, the mistress an' me's gaun till the theayter the nicht, an' ye maun cum wi' us."

"Oh, na," sez I, "A'll no gang, bit dinnae let that stap ye an' the mistress, fur A can sit here an' read the paper till ye cum back."

"Na," sez he, "ye'll dae nathin' o' the soart; ye'll jist gang wi' us."

"Bit A niver had my fit in a place o' the soart," sez I.

"Oh, ye hae niver had the chance, A suppoas," sez he.

"A doot its a sin," sez I.

"Weel," sez he, "we'll talk aboot that whun we cum back."

"A wud rether no' gang," sez I.

"Noo, dinnae say anither wurd," sez the mistress; "fur A want ye tae cum, an' shair ye cudnae refuse me?"

A lauched, "A cud not, indeed, mem," sez I. "A niver cud refuse a wuman ocht. Och, och; there's a bit o' auld Eve in a' the wemen yit."

"Ay, an' a bit o' auld Adam in the men," sez she, "for they like tae lay a' the blame on the wemen."

Weel, tae mak' a lang story short, sayven o'clock seen us a' doon at the theayter. My, bit yon's a big hoose! It wud mak ye dizzy tae luk up at it, an' they hae raws o' men's heids cut oot o' stane stuck a' alang the frunt o' it. Whun we went inside we had tae gang up ower a' the lot o' stairs, an' at last we went throo' a kin' o' a big screen, an' there we wur inside the theayter. The hoose was

roon like a hoop, an' the sates wur a' nicely stuffed an' covered wi' rid claith, an' they went roon the hoose in rings. We got intil the foremost yin, an' whun a sut doon, sez my freen till me, sez he—

"Luk ower the edge."

My! A niver got sich a scaur in my life. A suppoas A wuz fifty feet up in the air.

"Oh, sur," sez I, "A cudnae sit here."

"What fur," sez he.

"A wud fa' ower," sez I.

"Na feer," sez he.

"As shair as daith A wull!" sez I.

The mistress lauched, an' sez she—

"Whun A'm no feer'd ye neednae be, fur yer as heavy agen as me."

"A wud rether no cum till the gellery," sez I.

"Yer no in the gellery," sez my freen, "luk, the gellery's up aboon ye."

A lukit up, an' there wuz anither place ower wur heids. Then A tuk a ticht grup o' the railin' in front o' me, and lukit doon, an' there the fowk wur cumin' poorin' in, bit A wuz up that heech that they lukit like wee boys an lasses.

"What dae ye ca' that place doon there?" sez I.

"That's the pit," sez my freen.

"An' what place is this that we're in?"

"The upper boxes," sez he.

"Boxes!" sez I.

He turned roon tae say sumthin' till the mistress, an' A deklare A felt my heart batin' ower ocht, fur a begood tae think that if the man the place belanged till wud shut up the boxes, an' ocht tae happen, hoo wud we get oot?.

"I hope the place wull no tak' fire," sez I.

"Nae feer o' that," sez he.

"My! if the hoose wud happen tae fa', we wud ivery yin be kilt!" sez I.

"Ah, blethers!" sez he, "mak' yersel' comfirtable; yer as safe as ye wud be at yer ain fireside."

"Wha diz this place belang till?" sez I.

"Oh, ye jist axed in guid time," sez he; "luk yonner," and he pointed to a gentleman stanniu' doon alow us in a nice kerpeted place.

" He's a very nice man," sez I, and so he wuz. He had grey hair, an' as pleesint a face as iver A seen. Ye cudnae help likin' yon man.

Jist wi' that there wuz like a big bleeze shot oot o' the seilin', an' the fowk aboon wur heids set up a yell an' made a noise wi' their feet. A gied sich a jump, an' my heart flew till my mooth.

" Hoots, man," sez my freen, " it's the gas ; that's the wae they licht the hoose."

A deklare so it wuz. Awa up in the seilin' there wuz a thing jist like a big dish turned wi' the mooth doon, an' there wuz aboot a hunner lichts o' gas cumin' oot o' it.

" Hoo in the wurl dae they get up there tae licht it ?" sez I, bit he didnae hear me, for a band begood tae play, an' my ! bit it wuz nice. Weel, waens, jist as I wuz sittin' lissenin' dizn't a grate big green claith that wuz hung up at the tither side o' the hoose birl awa ayont it, furnished jist like the Squire's, an' there's a nice lass wi' a cap on her picklin' up bits o' paper aff the kerpet. Then in steps a cross-lukin' man an axes if the mistress wuz in. The lass she birled roon, and she wuz as like Jane that leeves in the meinister's as ocht iver ye seen, an' she spauk till him gie an' sharp, an' A seen she didnae want till gie him ony news. Weel, then, sum twa or three ither gentlemen cummed drappin in, inquirin' for sumbuddy, an' the lass answered them very civilly. My freen whuspered till me that it wuz a room in a hotel A wuz lukin' at.

" Weel, wha diz these young fellows want tae see ?" sez I.

" A nice young lady," sez he.

" Oh, they wud !" sez I.

Weel, then A notised a terble nice, cliver-lukin' young man, cumin' in till the hotel wi' a nice licht broon-coloured shoot o' claes on him, an' the lass allooed him tae sit doon an' wait for the mistress. Jist wi' that a big, stoot, well-dressed lady cummed in an' shuk han's wi' him an' talkit a while till him, bit A seen richtly he didnae want till be bothered wi' her. Hooaniver, he wuz very polite wi' her, an' lissened till a' she had tae say ; bit it wuz as muckle as A cud dae tae keep frae tellin' her till gang oot o' that, fur A cud see richtly he didnae want her. Dae ye know bit A tuk a terble fancy till him the minit A seen him. My ! he cud luk that stern-like, and the nixt minit he wud be as pleesint as a lady. His name wuz Mester Bowclick, or sumthin' like that. Weel, the wuman went awa, an' in cum a nice, smert young fellow, wi' a moustashe on his upper lip,

an' he floo forrit an' shuk hans wi' Mester Bowclick, an' there, my deer, wasn't he his brither, an' the man that A likit gied the tither yin a big letter, an' tell't him he wuz made a capten in the ermy, an' wud hae tae gang awa till the war.

Weel, A seen the young fellow wuz pleesed, an' still he wud rether a stied at hame, an' sez I till my freen—

" Is he feered o' bein' shot ?"

He lauched, an' sez he—

" Oh, no, he's coortin' that young lady, an' he wud rether no lee her."

" A wud like terble weel tae see her," sez I.

" She'll be here this minit," sez he.

Weel, Mester Bowclick wuz far liker a man till be a Capten nor his brither wuz, an' as A said afore, he wuz rael sherp, an' he lukit at his brither, an' sez he, gruppin' him by the erm, sez he—

" What ir ye up till ? what deilment ir ye up till ?" sez he.

Weel, he had tae tell him, an' Mester Bowclick lauched an' made fun o' him, bit the Capten said his sweetheart wuz an angel, an' iverything like that.

Weel, then, the auld wuman cummed in agen, an' A seen she wuz the young lady's ma. Then the twa young men went oot, an' the wuman cried—

" Dora ! Dora !"

Weel, A seen a daur apenin', an' a nice young lady lukit oot, an' whun she seen there wuz nae yin in the room bit her ma she cummed forrit. My ! bit she wuz purty, an' she had the nicest goolden hair ye iver seen. She wuz dressed as plain as ocht, an' she sut doon at the pianer an' played on it that nice that it brocht the tears till my e'en.

" A doot she's no in guid health," says I tae my freen'.

" She's poor," sez he, " an the hotel-keeper wants his bill pyed, an' she haes nae money."

" My, A wush sumbuddy wud tell the Capten !" sez I, " A'm shair he haes plenty o' money."

" Dinna speek sae lood," sez my freen.

Weel, she went awa an' changed her claes, an' cum oot agen nicely dressed, an' then in cums the young men, an' sich a bit o' shakin' han's ye niver seen. A wush ye had seen the way the Capten's brither luldt at her, an' sez he, till the Capten, sez he—

" She is an angel, my boy."

My, A wuz gled till heer that, fur A wuz o' the same noshin mysel, an' whun Mr. Bowclick thocht it A knowed A wuz richt.

Sez I till my freen, " A wush ye wud write a wee note an' get it slippit till the Capten aboot the hotel man."

He put doon his heid an' lauched till A thocht he wud a chokit. At last he lukit up an' whuspered till me—

" A think we'll gang hame ; it's no richt tae be here."

" A see nae herm in it," sez I, " an' if A shud sit here till mornin' A'll see hoo this en's."

Weel, then, didn't they a' gang oot, an' lee the Capten an' Miss Dora thegither, an' didn't he tell her hoo he luved her, an' she beggit him till gang awa.

" Bedad, my boy," sez I till myself, " A'll bate a penny she wud rether hae yir brither, an' A cudnae blame her !"

Bit, till my surprise, she gied intil him, an' promised till be his wife ; bit A aye think that if she had seen the brither suiner it wud a been a match atween the twa o' them.

A deklare bit they got merried there an' then ; ye see he had tae gang aff till the war, an' she wuz till gang wi' him. A forgot till tell ye, though, that there wuz anither lady—a nice, wee, plump, black-avised buddy—that was a Countess, an' hadn't she a terble noshin o' the Capten, an' whun she seen him merried till the Dora yin she wuz cleen mad an' swore she wud be rivenged. Weel, it appeared that a' the fowk at the Hotel were " Dipplematties." A axed my freen what soart o' religion that wuz, bit he jist lauched at me. Weel, this wee dark lady wuz anither " dipplematty," an' what did she dae bit she stole a paper oot o' the Capten's box, an' got it pit intil a letter an' sent awa till the enemy, an' then she got it blamed on Dora, that wuz noo the Capten's wife, an' my, what a row there wuz !

A nice, pale-faced man that wuz a Rooshin cummed in, as he didnae ken wha the Capten wuz merried till, he begood a talkin' aboot Dora, an' said that she wuz a " dipplematty," an' had got him arrested an' pit in prison. Then it cum oot aboot the paper that wuz stolen, an' the Capten wuz cleen mad, an' pit them ivery yin oot, an' sent for his wife. Puir dear ! bit A thocht a peety o' her. She wonnered what wuz wrang wi' him, bit he suin tell't her, an' A thocht she wud a went mad whun he blamed her wi' stealin' the paper.

Sez I till my freen, " What's the raison naebuddy tells him wha did it ?"

" They darnae," sez he, " it wud spoil the fun."

" It's quer fun," sez I. " If ye dinnae sen' him word A'll shoot oot till him that it wuz his auld sweetheart din it."

" For guidness sake, haud yer tongue !" sez he. " if ye dae the pleece wull tak ye up."

A deklare my bluid wuz boilin, an' it got the langer the waur, till at last the Capten jumpit up, an' bid her fareweel, an' went awa. Weel she flew tae the wundey an' threw up her erms, an' cried at him till cum back ; an' then she tuk a wake turn, an' droppit her hale length on the fluir, an' jist wi' that the big picter screen fell doon agen.

" They hae kilt her !" sez I, an' A jumpit till my fit an' made tae get oot.

" Whaur ir ye gaun ?" sez my freen.

" If A shud be hanged fur it," sez I, " A'll gang an' luk for Mester Bowclick an' tell him wha din it."

" Man, it's only actin," sez he.

Weel there beat tae be mair nor me thocht she wuz deid, for they kept shoutin' for her, an' at last oot she cum, as pale as ocht, an' A wuz that gled tae see her that my hans ir sair yit the way A clappit them.

A haenae time tae tell ye it a', bit the Capten's brither fun' it oot that very day, an' the nicest iver ye saw. My, bit a wuz terble weel pleesed.

My freen axed me what A thocht. Sez I, " It wuz jist like readin' a book, only the fowk showed us how the thing happened."

" Jist that " sez he ; " an' there's fowk objecks till the theayter wi'out just raison. Accordin' till them," sez he, " its wrang till change yer voice, till move yer face, till change yer claes, or dae a piece o' ressytashin."

" I knowed a man," sez I, " that wuz applyin' for a sityeashin, an' some o' the fowk objected till him because he went noo an' then till the theayter."

He jist gied a wee lauch, an' sez he, " some fowk's unco wise."

" Ay," sez his mistress, sez she, " in their ain estymashin."